

Bible . - New Testament . - Math
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S E L E C T I O N

OF

N O T E S

ON THE

Gospel of St. Matthew.

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THE difficulty of procuring any Commentary on the Gospels, except such as are printed along with the text, and are very voluminous and expensive, induced some of the Tutors in Trinity College Dublin, to compile the following Selection of Notes on the Gospel of St Matthew, for the use of their Pupils in their private studies, and of the junior attendants on Divinity Lectures. The Notes are extracted from Dodd's Commentary, which is collected from the works of the most approved modern Commentators, and contains references to the authors whom he quotes, which will enable the student to consult them. A short Harmony of the Evangelists published some time since is bound up with the Commentary, to enable the

the student to compare with more ease the corresponding passages of the Four Gospels together; a mode of studying the Scriptures which can never be too strongly recommended, as a careful comparison of the different parts of these sacred records will more clearly illustrate their meaning, and more forcibly evince their truth than any Commentary without such comparison can possibly do.

ST. MATTHEW.

GOSPEL signifies God's, or good tidings; and is of the same import with the original *εὐαγγέλιον*. See Luke ii. 10. The Gospel, according to St. Matthew, signifies, the history of the good tidings preached by Jesus Christ, as it is related by St. Matthew, one of his immediate disciples and followers; who was the first Evangelist, and who, it is generally agreed, wrote his Gospel for the use of the Jewish converts at Jerusalem, as some suppose about the year of our Lord 48 or 49; but as others, with more shew of probability, about the year 38.

[Chap. i. ver. i.] The book of the generation.] The account of the descent, or genealogy. Wat. As St. Matthew wrote for the Jews, he deduces the genealogy of Christ only from Abraham, and brings it down from him through David, to shew his title to the kingdom of Israel; while St. Luke, who wrote for the Gentile converts, deduces the genealogy from Adam. See Gen. xxii. 18.

St. Matthew gives to Jesus the name of Christ, which signifies anointed, and marks out the royal,

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sacerdotal and prophetic office, answering to the name of Messiah, by which the Redeemer was always known and spoken of by the Jews.

One right way of estimating things, says Dr. Heylin, is by our want of them. If we look into ourselves, we shall find a want of Christ in all his offices; for, before some considerable proficiency in religion, men find themselves, as it were, at a distance from God, alienated from him, and incapacitated for that free access to the Creator, which it should seem, an intelligent being might naturally hope for. Hence we want a mediator, an intercessor; in a word, a Christ, in his priestly functions. This regards our situation with respect to God. With respect to ourselves, we find a total darkness, blindness, ignorance of God and the things of God: here we want a Christ in his prophetic office, to enlighten our minds, and teach us the whole will of God: We also find within us a strong mis-rule of appetites and passions, and discordant interests, blindly espoused: For these we want a Christ, in his regal office, to govern our hearts, and establish his kingdom within us.

Ver. 8. Joram begat Ozias.] It is undeniably evident from the 2 Chron. chap. xxii, and following, that three princes are here omitted, if this table was taken from any records existing among the Jews, as most probably was the case, the Evangelist is not responsible for the exactness of it. There are instances of the like omissions in other genealogies. See Ezra vii. where by comparing that chapter with 1 Chron. iv. it is found, that five generations are left out.

Ver. 16. Jacob begat Joseph.] It is a maxim among the Jews, that the family of the mother is not called a family; all their pedigrees are reckoned and deduced from the father. This is the reason why

why St. Matthew had here set down the genealogy of Joseph; and thus Jesus Christ is the son of David, because Joseph's marriage with Mary, gave to Jesus Christ a right to all the privileges which a child, that was born of strange parents, was entitled to by adoption, and which were granted by law to the posterity of a man who had married his brother's widow. It is moreover very probable, that Mary was an only daughter and an heiress, and consequently obliged to marry in her own family. See Numb. xxxvi. 6, 9. so that by giving the genealogy of Joseph, St. Matthew gives at the same time that of Mary. He is called the husband of Mary; for the names of husband and wife were given by the Jews to persons who were only betrothed. See Gen. xxix. 21. Deut. xxii. 24.

Some copies however read, Joseph to whom the Virgin Mary was betrothed.

Ver. 17. So all the generations, &c.] St. Matthew designing to shew that Jesus was the Messiah, began his genealogy at Abraham, to whom the promise was originally made, that in his seed, all the families of the earth shall be blessed: But the succession of Christ's ancestors downward naturally resolves itself into three classes; namely, first of private persons, from Abraham to David; next of kings, from David to Jehoiachim; and then of private persons again, from the Babylonish captivity, when an end was put to the royal dignity of our Lords progenitors in the person of Jehoiachim; who, though he was born twenty-six years before the captivity, and really swayed the sceptre, is properly enough reckoned among the private persons from the captivity to Christ: because the Babylonians stripped him of his dignity, and reduced him to the condition of a private man. It is observable

that in the second clause, the sacred writer does not say, all the generations, as knowing, that for good reasons he had omitted three belonging to that interval; but only that the whole number of those, which he had named, was fourteen, as they really were.—See Macknight and Whitby.

Ver. 21. Thou shalt call his name JESUS.] That is, HE SHALL BE GOD THE SAVIOUR; for he shall prove that glorious and divine Person, the long-expected Messiah, intended by God to save his people, even all that truly believe in him, both from the punishment and from the dominion of their sins; by procuring an ample pardon for them, and raising them, after a life of holiness on earth to a state of complete perfection and happiness. Bishop Pearson seems to have set the etymology of the name JESUS in the clearest light in his large discourse upon it, where he endeavours to prove, that JAH one of the names of GOD, enters into the composition of the Hebrew name Joshua, to which Jesus answers; a derivation, which plainly shews how Christ's being called Jesus, *i. e.* God our Saviour, was in effect an accomplishment of the prophecy that he should be called EMMANUEL; for what else says the Bishop, is God with us, than God our Saviour?—Well therefore hath the Evangelist conjoined the Prophet and the Angel, asserting that Christ was therefore named JESUS, because it was foretold he should be called EMMANUEL. The angelical God the Saviour, being in the highest propriety the prophetic God with us. See Pearson on the Creed, p. 69—71. and Doddridge.

Ver. 22. Now all this was done, &c.] Now by these events was fulfilled that which, &c. Wat. This sounds as if the prophecy was the cause of the
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the event predicted; but generally speaking, things do not come to pass because they are foretold, but are foretold, because they certainly will come to pass. The difficulty here lies in the particle *that*, put for the Greek *ὅτι*, which does not always signify the cause, but sometimes the event or consequence. The Evangelists so often use it in the latter sense, that there will be frequent occasion to have recourse to it, and therefore the reader will do well to bear this remark in mind. It may be proper just to observe, that the phrase, *it might be fulfilled*, and the like, were frequently designed and understood to mean no more than something answered alike in both cases. There was an aptness or suitableness in the cause, the parts or circumstances of one event to the other. Even to this day, the Jews in their comments say, *that is it which was spoken*, and *to fulfill*, upon relating a similar fact, and not the same referred to in the prophet they cite; so that we must not always understand this phrase as applicable to immediate prophecies only. See Wetstein, Hammond and Heylin.

Ver. 23. Behold a Virgin, &c.] To what we have said on this prophecy in its proper place, *Isai. vii. 14.* may now be added, that it is not possible to understand it of any other person than of Jesus Christ and the blessed Virgin, in whom alone it is completely and literally fulfilled: But Bishop Chandler hath with so much learning and ability explained this text to the satisfaction of all rational persons, that I have nothing more to do than to refer my reader to the 237th and following pages of his defence of Christianity. See also Green's Fourth Letter to Mr. Collins, and Usher's Annals, A. M. 3262. The last clause of this verse seems

to supply us with a strong proof, that St. Matthew wrote his Gospel in Greek, and not in Hebrew, as many writers have supposed.

CHAP. II.

Ver. 1. Bethlehem of Judea—Wifemen, &c.] Eastern Magi. Wat. Bethlehem was a small town in the tribe of Judah; which lay on the South of Jerusalem; there was a city of the same name in Gallilee, which belonged to the tribe of Zebulun. Josh. xix. 15. and this is the reason why the former is called Bethlehem of Judea. In the days of Herod the King, is an Hebraism for the time of King Herod, the Great, who was at first Tetrarch or Governor of Judea, and afterwards declared King of the same country. See Joseph. Hist. Jud. l. xiv. c. 3. l. xvii. c. 10. The Evangelical and Apostolical History begins with Herod the Great, and ends with Agrippa the last King of the Jews. Concerning these Wifemen or Magi, four things are pretty generally agreed; that they were Persians, or Parthians: that they were priests or ministers of religion; that they frequently travelled into different countries; and that they applied themselves very much to the contemplation of the stars, or rather to astrology. As to the title here given them, it is certain that the word *Μάγος* was not appropriated in ancient times to such as practised wicked arts; but frequently was used to express philosophers or men of learning; and those particularly who were curious in examining the works of nature, and in observing the motions of the heavenly bodies. Compare Daniel ii. 2. 27. and v. 11. Septuagint, and see Wettstein and Doddridge.

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Ver. 4. And when he had gathered, &c.] And having assembled. Wat. All the chief priests, must comprehend here not only the high-priest, for the time being, and his deputy, with those who formerly had borne that office; but also the heads of the twenty-four courses, as well as any other persons of peculiar eminence in the priesthood. See 1 Chron. xxiv. 3. 2 Chron. xxxv. 4. The Scribes of the people mean the rabbies or doctors, who explained the law to the people. See Michaelis's Introduction to the New Testament.

Ver. 8. Search diligently for, &c.] Make exact enquiry about, &c. Wat. It is an amazing thing that so suspicious and artful a prince as Herod, should put such an important affair on so precarious a footing; when, if he had not gone himself, it would have been so easy, under pretence of doing honor to these learned strangers, to have sent a guard of soldiers with them, who might, humanly speaking, without any difficulty, have slaughtered the Child and his parents on the spot. Perhaps he might have been unwilling to commit such an act of cruelty in the presence of these sages, lest their report of it might have rendered him infamous abroad: or rather we must refer it to a secret infatuation, with which God, whenever he pleases, can confound the most sagacious of mankind. See Doddridge and Calmet.

Ver. 10. When they saw the star.] The editors of the Prussian Testament add very properly—*thus standing still*, which the sense evidently requires; for the Evangelist says, that upon the appearance of the star the Wise-men went directly into the house where Jesus was.

Dr. Doddridge reads a star or meteor, because, says he, no star could point out not only a town, but
a particular

thirdly, not to defile himself with the dead. Now in each of these particulars, as we have observed, on the 21st verse of that chapter, the Nazarite/was a lively type of Christ; whose extraordinary endowments, as man, were not from any natural causes, but from above, even from the spirit of God: who was invested with all power and authority, of which hair was an emblem: (see Judg. xvi. 17. 20. 22. Comp. 1 Cor. xi. 7. in the Greek) and who was entirely separate from dead works, from sin and sinners. It would be needless and far exceeds our present bounds, to quote the prophecies, wherein the *Messiah* is described, as endowed with these high qualifications. Many of the predictions concerning Christ may be reduced to one or other of these heads; and in order to turn the attention of men to him as the true Nazarite, in whom the type was completely fulfilled, it is remarkably observed here by St. *Matthew*, that he came and dwelt at Nazareth; that what was spoken of by the prophets might be fulfilled, he shall be called; *i. e.* shall be truly and justly *Ναζαρεως*, a Nazarite; so the vulgate *Nazaræus*. Thus, whilst the Jews and Romans were calling him in contempt, the *Nazarene*, the providence of God was at the same time pointing him out to mankind as the true Nazarite, from the circumstance of his dwelling in that city which has been prophetically, with a view no doubt, to this important event, called *Nazareth*, or the city of the Nazarites; even as Pilate, by the inscription on our Lord's Cross, proclaimed him both to Jews and Gentiles to be the Saviour, the king of the Jews; though doubtless he intended by it to ridicule and expose his pretensions. See John xix. 19. 20. and Parkhurst on the word *Ναζαρεθ*. It may be proper

per just to observe that there are other and different expositions given of this prophecy; the editors of the Prussian Testament agree with the margin of our Bible, and think that the passage referred to, is either Judg. xiii. 5. where Sampson, a type of the Messiah is spoken of; or Isaiah xi. 1. where the Messiah is stiled the netzer or branch, while Wetstein, Doddridge, Macknight and many others, suppose that the expression refers to the mean and despicable circumstances of the Messiah, and the reproachful manner wherein he was treated, agreeable to several prophetic passages of scripture. But Houbigant is of opinion that the Evangelist refers to the blessings of Jacob and Moses, in each of which Joseph, as a type of the Messiah, is called *Nazir*, or *Nazarite*. See Gen. xlix. 26. Deut. xxxiii. 16. and Houbigant's notes on the last place.

CHAP. III.

Ver. 1. In those days.] St. Luke in the passage of the margin has specified this period very particularly; and as he has given us a more full and exact account of John the Baptist than St. Matthew, we shall refer our readers to the notes on his Gospel. The wilderness of Judea was not a place wholly void of inhabitants; but hilly, and not so fruitful, or so well inhabited as the rest of Judea: though there were several cities in it. Joshua reckons six. See Josh. xv. 61. 62. St. John was born and had been brought up in this wilderness. Compare Luke i. 39. 40.

Ver. 2.] Repent ye.] This was only the substance and result of his preaching. The kingdom of Heaven and the kingdom of God, are but two phrases

phrases for the same thing, agreeably to the style of the Hebrews, who frequently used the word *Heaven* to denote God himself, who dwells there. Hence what is here called the kingdom of Heaven, is by St. Mark and St. Luke called the kingdom of God; Mark i. 15. Luke vi. 20. The kingdom of Heaven therefore signifies here the kingdom of God, which was founded and established by Jesus Christ. The kingdom of grace here, introductory to the kingdom of glory hereafter; and this expression is founded on Dan. ii. 44. vii. 13. 14. Now, as the kingdom of Heaven was to be opened by the Gospel, John the Baptist rightly says, that it *was at hand*; since Jesus Christ entered on his public ministry about six months after. See Luke iii. 2. 3. The demand of repentance shewed that this was a spiritual kingdom, and that no wicked man, how politic or brave, how learned or renowned soever, could possibly be a genuine member of it. See Whitby, L. Infant, Doddridge and Heylin, p. 19. for the next verse we refer to the notes on Isai. xl. 3.

Ver. 4. His raiment of camels hair.] The Jews used to wear hairy or coarse garments in time of sorrow and humiliation. See Matt. xi. 21. The Nazarites did the same till they had fulfilled their vow. It was also a dress sometimes worn by the prophets; Zech. xiii. 4. 2 Kings i. 8. Rev. vi. 12. xi. 3. In all these respects, it suited John the Baptist, as he preached repentance, as he was a prophet, and as he imitated the austerity which was practised by the Nazarites. He wore a *leathern girdle*, as did some of the old prophets, and in particular Elijah, whom John the Baptist represented in habit, as well as in spirit and office. See 2 Kings i. 8. and compare Heb. xi. 37. Matt. xi. 14.
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food was *locusts*, the eating of which was allowed by the law, and customary in the eastern parts of the world; as we have shewn in the note on Lev. xi. 22.

Ver. 5. And all the region round about Jordan.] The novelty of a prophet's appearance in Israel, the family of John, the circumstances of his birth, the extraordinary character, which he had maintained for strict and undissembled piety, all concurred, no doubt, with the time of his appearance, and the people's impatient desire of the Messiah's arrival, and uneasiness under the Roman yoke, to draw such vast multitudes after him. See Calmet, and Doddridge.

Ver. 6. Were baptised of him.] There were two kinds of baptism in use among the Jews; one was that of the priests at their consecration. Lev. viii. 6. The other was that of the Heathens proselyted to the Jewish religion. It was therefore no unheard-of rite, which the Messiah's harbinger made use of. His countrymen were well acquainted both with the thing itself and with its signification: They knew that it denoted some great change, either in the opinions or practices of those who submitted to it, and implied a promise of acceptance with God, on the part of him who administered it. Moreover they had been led by a passage in their sacred books, Zech. xiii. 1. to expect that either the Messiah himself, or some of his attendants, would baptise; as is evident from the question which the messengers of the Sanhedrim put to the Baptist: John i. 25. *Why baptisest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, &c.?* They must have known therefore, that John's baptism represented purification both of heart and life, as necessary even to Jews themselves, before they could become
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the subjects of so holy a prince as the *Messiah*; and that it was a solemn obligation binding those who received it to lead such lives. Hence, as Dr. Whitby observes, they are mistaken, who think John's baptism the same in kind with that which Christ afterwards instituted for the admission of disciples into his church. The difference between the two was considerable. *First*, John did not baptise either in the name of Christ, or of the Holy Ghost, much less did he baptise them with the Holy Ghost, a circumstance mentioned by himself as what remarkably distinguishes Christ's baptism from his. *Secondly*, They who were baptised with John's baptism, did not profess their faith in the Messiah, as actually come, neither did they receive his baptism in testimony of their entertaining that belief; for, after having administered it, he exhorted his disciples to believe on him who was to come, therefore his baptism could not initiate men into the Christian church. See Acts xix. 4. 5. *Thirdly*, John's was the baptism of repentance, whereby all who had a sense of their sins, and professed repentance, were promised pardon, and exhorted to believe in the Messiah, who was soon to appear; or it was a washing with water to shew the Jews, that they might be cleansed both from their prejudices and vices, in order to their becoming fit members of the Messiah's kingdom. Accordingly we read, that they who were baptised confessed their sins. This confession of sins was absolutely required as a condition without which there could be no expiation, Lev. vi. 21. no remission of them; 1 John i. 9. If those who were baptised had committed any great crime or scandalous offence, they were to make a public and open confession of it, as appears from Acts xix.

18. Otherwise

18. Otherwise this confession implies only a general acknowledgment that they were finners; that they repented of their sins, and were resolved to forsake them. See Whitby, Macknight, and L'Enfant.

Ver. 7. Pharisees.] A Jewish sect so called from a Hebrew word signifying separated or set apart, because they distinguished themselves from the rest of the Jews, by pretending to a greater degree of holiness and piety than the generality of them did; and by some particular observances. The Saducees were another Jewish sect, so named from Sadoc, the founder of it. The most authentic account of these sects may be seen in Josephus's Antiq. b. xviii. c. i. and Jewish War, b. ii. c. viii. All writers of Jewish antiquities describe them largely, but none better than Dr. Prideaux; Connect. vol. ii. p. 335. and the editors of the Prussian Testament, in their excellent introduction, which is translated into English, and well deserves the perusal of all who would thoroughly understand the New Testament. It is manifest from St. John's reproof of these Pharisees and Sadducees, that they did not come to his baptism with true faith; or else that they fancied that mere baptism could procure them the remission of their sins. See Luke vii. 29. Matt. xxi. 25. from which passages it appears, that the Pharisees did not receive the baptism of John. It is also evident, from Luke iii. 7. that there were among the multitude some persons of no better dispositions than the Pharisees, since the Baptist gives them the same reproof calling them, *ye brood of vipers*, as Dr. Waterland very properly renders it.

Ver. 8. Fruits meet for repentance.] Worthy of repentance, that is, "Do such works as may manifest the truth and sincerity of your repentance. See Acts xxvi. 20. and comp. Ephes. v. 9.

Ver. 9. Think not to say, &c.] Dr. Whitby has shewn fully how great was the presumption of the Jews on their relationship to Abraham. Munster upon this text quotes a remarkable passage from the Talmud, wherein it is said, "That Abraham sits next the gates of hell, and doth not permit any wicked Israelite to go down into it." These Jews might perhaps pervert the promise in Jer. xxxi. 35, 36. to support this vain and dangerous confidence, in opposition to the most express and awful threatenings; Deuter. xxx. 19, &c.

Ver. 10. And now also the axe, &c.] The axe is already laid to the root of the trees; every tree then, &c. Wat. "There is now no more time for delay: God is going to offer the last dispensation of repentance and mercy; which, if you accept not, his vengeance hangs over you; destruction will speedily overtake you." See Isai. x. 33. 34. L'Enfant observes, that this verse contains a prophecy of the total ruin and destruction of the temple, the city, and the nation of the Jews, which happened forty years after the death of Jesus Christ.

Ver. 11. I indeed baptise you.] This is the answer, which John made to the question put to him. John i. 19. in which he shews what difference there was between him and the Messiah. "I indeed, says he, baptise you *with water*, to bring you to *repentance*; for they who were baptised, not only declared that they had repented of their sins, but they had bound themselves never to commit the like again, and to lead a life of holiness and virtue;" which is the meaning of
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of the Baptist in this place; and this is the *new life*, Rom. vi. 4. whereto people engaged themselves when baptism was administered to them. *He that cometh after me*, says he (namely Jesus Christ who entered on his ministry about six months after John, and was about six months younger; see Luke i. 36.) is mightier than I; whose shoes, &c. a proverbial and humiliating expression, meaning, "whose lowest servant I am not worthy to be," and denoting the great superiority of Jesus Christ above John. *He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost*, the effusion of which on the day of Pentecost, St. John styles a *baptism*; shewing thereby the copiousness and abundance of it: and indeed it was a glorious effusion over the church, of which Jesus Christ was the author, Acts ii. 2. 33. He adds, *and with fire*; because the Holy Ghost descended on the Apostles in the shape of fire, and had the same power and virtue as that element of purifying, enlivening, &c. We may just observe that in the Greek it is, *Baptise you in water,—in the Holy Ghost*: words which well express the ceremony of baptism, which was at first performed by plunging the whole body in water, as also the copious effusion of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost. See L'Enfant, and Wetstein.

Ver. 12. Whose fan is in his hand, &c.] This expression is taken from the prophetic writings. See Lev. xxvi. 23. Isai. xli. 16, &c. Dr. Shaw observes, that in the eastern countries, after the grain is trodden out, they winnow it, by throwing it up against the wind with a shovel; the *τὸ πύρον*, here, and Luke iii. 17. rendered a fan, or van, too cumbersome a machine to be thought of. To understand the Baptist's meaning right, we should observe, that in this verse he describes the authority

riety of Christ's ministry, as [in that preceding he had described the efficacy of it. "The Messiah is infinitely mightier than I; not only as he will, bestow on you the miraculous gifts of the spirit, will purify and enliven your souls, and kindle in your hearts pious and divine affections; but also as he has power to reward them, who obey him, with eternal life, and to punish such with everlasting destruction who reject him. See Macknight.

Ver. 13. To be baptised of him.] By this he intended to do an honour to John's ministry, and to conform himself to what he appointed for his followers. It was for this last reason, that he drank of the Sacramental cup. See Diodati. And certainly our Lord's baptism tended to promote the ends, both of his own mission and of his forerunner's, as it established the authority of both. It established John's mission; great honour being done him by the Messiah's receiving his baptism. It established our Lord's mission also; for after he was baptised, the testimonies of the spirit, and voice from Heaven, were given him in presence of the multitude assembled at Jordan. That these testimonies should have been given him on this occasion, rather than on any other, was fit, because it was an august manner of opening our Lord's ministry; was the most public occasion that could be found, and pointed him out as the Messiah to the Baptist, who was thereby qualified for the principal duty of his mission. See Macknight.

Ver. 14. But John forbade him.] But John refused him. Wat. See the note on John i. 31. Doddridge and others have it, would have hindered or prevented him, saying, I have need to be baptised of you, and do you come to me? But Jesus was in his own person to pass through, and sanctify all states;

states; and although the last stage wherein virtue attains its highest purity, was his reserved province, with a regard to others yet he himself began in the first; so that there was no kind or degree of moral goodness wherein he did not excel. He was, if we may so speak, at the head of every form in the school of virtue, *He had in all things the pre-eminence*, as his apostle declares: to this end, he practised the virtues of every rank and condition. He accordingly appeared among the penitents at Jordan; and when John objected to his superior character, incompatible, as he thought, with such condescension, Jesus replied, let it be so for the present, *for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.* διὰ τὸ ποιῆσαι.

Ver. 16. The heavens were opened to him.] i. e. to John; to whose view as well as that of the Saviour, this wonderful vision was presented. St. Mark has so expressed it, as plainly to refer the seeing it to Christ; and John the Baptist has in another place assured us, that he saw it, and took particular notice of it, as the sign he was directed to observe, as the distinguishing characteristic of the Messiah. See John i. 32. 34. The verse might be rendered with more propriety, *And Jesus being baptised, had just gone out of the water, when lo! the heavens were opened unto him:* ὁδὸς, rendered, *straightway* in our version, not denoting the quickness of Christ's coming out of the water, but the immediate opening of the heavens after it. See Blackwall's Sacred Classics, vol. i. p. 89. The Spirit of God is said here to have descended like a dove: in St. Luke it is added σωματικῇ ἑίδει, in a corporeal form, a phrase which might have been used with propriety, though there had not been, as is generally supposed, any appearance of the shape of the animal here mentioned, but only a lambent flame falling

ing from heaven, with a hovering, *dove-like motion*, which Dr. Scott and others suppose to have been all. But Justin Martyr says expressly, that it was in the form of a dove; adding, that all Jordan shone with the reflection of the light; and Jerome calls it, *the appearance of a dove*. It resembled a *dove*, says Wetstein, both in appearance and flight. See Hammond, and Whitby.

REFLECTIONS ON CHAP. III.

Repentance is the true preparation for the kingdom of heaven. We should therefore every moment be prepared for it, because this kingdom is every moment approaching nearer to us. If this kingdom is a kingdom of love, the repentance which prepares us for it must likewise be a repentance of love; that is, evangelical repentance, which flows from a sight of Christ, from a sense of his love, and the hope of forgiveness through him. Kindness is conquering; abused kindness is humbling and melting. The language of the truly penitent heart is, "*What a wretch was I to sin against such grace! against the law and love of such a kingdom!*"

He who preaches repentance, ought to perform it himself, and to join the outward part to the inward; this persuades more than words. All is singular in St. John (ver. 4.) not to attract the esteem and praises of men, but to awaken their attention: with an awful severity of manners and of doctrine, he was sent before Christ to prepare his way.

Our Lord's submitting himself to baptism, ver. 13. should teach us a holy exactness and care in the observance of those positive institutions, which
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owe their obligation merely to a divine command, for thus also it *becometh us to fulfil all righteousness*; every thing just and needful in itself, as well as every thing meet, decent, regular, exemplary, and of good report.

CHAP. IV.

Ver. 1. Then was Jesus led up, &c.] Then, *i. e.* immediately after his baptism, was Jesus led, or borne by a strong impulse of the spirit on his mind (See Luke iv. 14.) into the wilderness: which Mr. Maundrel is of opinion was the wilderness near Jordan; a miserable and horrid place, according to his account, consisting of high barren mountains; so that it looks as if nature had suffered some violent convulsions there. Hither Christ retired to prepare himself for the discharge of his great office. Christ the second Adam, was to remedy all the evils of the fall. The word, *διαβόλος* signifies properly a slanderer, or a false accuser, and answers to the Hebrew Satan: It is found in the Scripture only in the singular number, and signifies that evil spirit who tempted our first parents; and who is represented in the sacred writings as the head of the rebellious angels, and the adversary of all good men. See 1 Thess. iii. 5. 1 Pet. v. 8. The existence of good and bad spirits, is the plain doctrine of Scripture; and we must be perfect Sadducees, to doubt or deny the being of either, upon the faith and credit of the divine word. It may be proper just to observe, that a late ingenious writer has endeavoured to shew that this very remarkable transaction was not real, but visionary; grounding his arguments upon the many difficulties which occur to our understandings in the
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the literal account of it. I conceive that by the same arguments it would be easy to prove almost any part of the sacred story to be visionary. There is no intimation of any thing of this sort in the sacred historians; the detail of facts is plain, and in their usual manner; It is positively said, *that Jesus was led up, that he fasted, that he hungered, &c. &c.* Nor does there appear any thing in the letter whereupon to ground the idea, that what is here related was not real. That the whole event was most wonderful and extraordinary, we readily allow; and may as readily allow, that from the very short narration we have of it, it is not possible for us to enter completely into the whole meaning and purport of it. But this should be no objection against our receiving and acknowledging the truth of the fact; which the more miraculous it is, the more it requires the submission of our faith, and the humble adoration of our minds. See more on ver. 8. and Farmer's Inquiry into the temptation of Christ.

Ver. 2. And when he had fasted forty days.] It was usual for persons to prepare themselves for any sacred office by fasting, and prayers so intense, as to cause a neglect of common food. See Acts xiii. 3. xiv. 23. The number forty is remarkably distinguished in Scripture: Moses and Elijah fasted forty days. See also Numb. xxvi. 1. Sam. xvii. 6. Gen. 1. 3. Jonah iii. 4. Ezek. iv. 6. It is a very just remark of Dr. Whitby, that to institute, or to pretend to keep a fast for forty days, in imitation of this example of our Lord, is to place morality in numbers, and introduce an endless heap of superstitious follies: for it is certain, that so great and so long abstinence is inconsistent with the frailty of our nature, and so can be no duty. Better here is the note of Theophylact

last and others, that, "we are then especially to expect temptations, when we are alone, and when we are in straits and exigencies, from which we see no ordinary way of deliverance:" which was the case of Christ, he being, *hungry in the wilderness*, and fed at last only by angels ministering to him.

Ver. 3. When the tempter came to him he said, &c.] Christ was tempted in all things, Heb. iv. 15. and as the things which solicit us to sin may be referred to three kinds, pleasures, honours and riches, (1 John ii. 16.) Christ being tempted by all these, came off victorious. When he asked not God that the stones might be made bread, he shewed his conquest over pleasure, or the animal appetite; when he cast not himself down from the temple, he shewed his triumph over vain glory; and in the third temptation, expressing his contempt of the goods of this world, he shewed that nothing in this life could conquer his piety and regard to God. See L'Enfant, and Wettstein.

Ver. 4. But by every word, &c.] Then the tempter came to him, and said if, &c. So the Evangelist briefly relates the substance of this first temptation; which certainly was then displayed with all the colourings of reason; and which, by way of illustration, and only to shew, what might be suggested on the occasion, may be thus represented: "If you really are the Son of God, and the voice you imagine to have heard from heaven be no delusion, assert your prerogative: do not let a Son of God starve; vindicate your sonship and justify your father's goodness; who has not given you the miraculous powers you think yourself endowed with for nothing. Jesus answered, man, &c. The quotation is very apposite: for it is taken
from

from Deuteronomy, where Moses recapitulating to the Jews the hardships and temptations with which they had been exercised in the desert, the more effectually to remind them of the great lesson he was to inculcate, says, Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness to humble thee and to prove thee (the original here is the same word which in other places, is rendered, to tempt thee) to make known what is in thine heart; whether thou wouldest keep his commandment or no: and he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, (a food before unknown) that he might make thee know, that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord, &c. *i. e.* whatever God appoints, or by whatever way he pleases.

Ver. 5. Then the devil taketh him, &c.] The original word παραλαμβάνει, signifies no more than to lead, to take along with one; as in the 70. Numb. xxii. 41. xxiii. 20. 27. 28. See Matt. xvii. 1. That it hath no other sense in this place, and also in the 8th verse, is plain from Luke iv. 5. 9. By the holy city is meant Jerusalem, which is frequently so called. The heathen writers often call those cities *holy*, in which any of their deities were supposed to hold their special residence, and from whence their oracles were delivered. Instead of *pinnacle*, Dr. Doddridge very properly reads *battlement*; observing that though *pinnacle* agrees very well with the etymology of the Grek word (πτερυγιον, *Wing. Wat.*) yet according to its use among us, it leads the English reader to imagine, that he stood on the point of a *spire*. The truth is, that the roof of the temple was flat, and had a ballustrade.

trade round it, which in some parts was so exceeding high, that one could hardly bear to look from it. See Deut. xxii. 8. and Joseph. Antiq. l. 15. ch. xi. Somewhere on the edge of this battlement we may suppose, was the scene of this temptation. We must not imagine, that the devil took *Jesus Christ*, and disposed of him as he would; but only that our blessed Saviour, who yielded to the temptation, was pleased to do what the devil required of him. It is a common thing to say, a person does a thing, when he orders or causes it to be done.

Ver. 6. If thou be the Son of God.] The Jews were undoubtedly right in thinking the Messiah is spoken of by Daniel, ch. vii. 13. 14. But they fell into a gross mistake, when, interpreting that passage literally, they believed the Messiah would actually *come in the clouds of heaven, and wrest the kingdom from the Romans*. See Matt. xxiv. 30. The Pharisees however, had the destruction of the Romans, and the miraculous erection of a temporal empire in view, when they required our Lord to shew them a sign from heaven; Matt. xvi. 1. And the people in general were so strongly impressed with the belief of it, that they overlooked all the proper proofs of Christ's mission, and rejected him, because he did not confirm it by that sign, John vii. 27, "Howbeit we know this man whence he is; but when Christ 'cometh, no man knoweth whence he is: No man knoweth from what particular place he shall come;" for the doctors thought that though the Messiah was to be born at Bethlehem, he was immediately to be conveyed thence, and concealed, till Elijah the Tishbite came from heaven and prepared matters for his reception; after which he was to be manifested in a miraculous manner: and as they expected that the Mes-

fiah was to come in the *clouds of heaven*, they thought his first appearance was to be in the temple, grounding this opinion on Mal. iii. 1. Psalm. cx. 2. Ifai. ii. 3. Now the second temptation, considered in the light of this popular error, had considerable strength in it; for the tempter's meaning was, "Since thou art the Son of God, thou shouldst cast thyself down from hence into the courts below, where the numerous worshippers, seeing thee borne up by angels, will immediately acknowledge thee as the Messiah coming to them in the clouds of heaven: For it is *written*, he shall give his angels charge," &c. Had not this been the devil's meaning, there was not the least reason for carrying Jesus to Jerusalem, and setting him on the *battlements* of the temple. He might as well have bidden him cast himself down from any precipice in the wilderness, or from the turret of any neighbouring town; where the interposition of angels in his preservation, would have been as conspicuous a proof to himself of his Messiahship, as in the holy city of Jerusalem. It may be objected indeed that the text cited by no means promises a visible interposition of ministering spirits for the preservation of the Messiah, as this sense of the temptation seems to require. But the answer is, that there was nothing to hinder *the father of lies* from putting an artful gloss upon a text of Scripture in order to delude: as if he had said, "Since God hath promised that his angels shall bear good men up in their hands, the Messiah may well expect the same favour, especially when it is necessary for the erecting his kingdom." And further the tempter's argument would have the more weight, if, as is probable, he was now *transformed* into an *angel of light*, and feigned a willingness to assist Jesus in the

the undertaking. See Macknight, *Sherlock on Prophecy*, appendix, p. 304. and the notes on Ps. 91-11.

Ver. 7. It is written again.] Or *also*, so *παλιν* here elegantly signifies, in opposition to the quotation which the tempter had made; which was indeed very imperfect. Jesus repels his attack by Scripture also, which, like that cited in his former answer, again relates to the children of Israel, exercised in circumstances not unlike his own in the wilderness, when, murmuring and impatient for want of water, as they had been before for want of food, they *tempted the Lord*, saying, *is the Lord among us or not?* See Exod. xii. 7. They questioned his presence with them, and wanted proofs of it by a new miracle. To *tempt* is to *try*, and the trial they would make argued their doubt and distrust. See the note on Deut. vi. 16.

The perfect faith of Jesus excluded all diffidence, and therefore would not admit any act on his part, whereby to put the divine goodness to the test, since he already had the fullest assurance of it. "I will not provoke the *Lord*, either by acting otherwise than he has appointed, or by requiring proofs of his power and veracity, after such as are sufficient, and have already been given." See Heylin, and Wetstein.

Ver. 8. Again the devil taketh him, &c.] The adversary enraged, as it should seem with his ill success in the two former attempts, casts off all disguise in this. He speaks no more of the Son of God, but desperate, and thence impudent and audacious, he offers at once his whole stock of gaudy trumperies, all worldly power, dominion and glory, and arrogantly sets the price at which they are to be purchased; this appears not so much

a temptation as an insult upon Jesus who refented it accordingly. Le Clerc is of the same opinion with the author referred to on ver. 1. that what is here related may more safely be conceived to have happened to Christ in a vision or dream than really; but this, says Dr. Whitby, is a vain dream and a vision of his own brain, and that which robs us of all the practical improvement of our Lord's temptation; for why should Christ have been led into a wilderness to have this dream or vision? Did he fast only in a vision forty days and forty nights, or why is it said that he afterwards was hungry? Why is it said that the devil spake to him, set him on a pinnacle, upon an high mountain, &c. &c.? and looks it not far more odd to give the devil power over the fancy of our Lord to raise such imaginations in him, and suggest such dreams to him than barely to give him that power over our Lord's body, which neither did, nor could do him any hurt. I observe again, that as God caused Moses to see the whole Land of Promise from the top of Nebo either by strengthening his eyes to see it thence, or else by representing it to him, as it were in a large plan or map, all the vallies round about him; so might the devil, in the vallies round about that high mountain upon which Christ stood, make a large draught of the stately edifices, guards and attendants of kings appearing in their splendor visible to the eyes of Christ; which appearance could not be so well made to him or advantageously seen, had he been in a plain. Wetstein is of opinion that the devil might point out the kingdoms of the world to him in some such manner as this: "Turn thy eyes to the east, there is the kingdom of the Persians to whom thy ancestors were subject, and the kingdom of Arabia rich in gold, in frankincense and myrrh; turn

to the south, there is the kingdom of Egypt, where the descendants of the Patriarchs suffered so long and severe a servitude: Turn to the west, there you see Tyre and the isles abounding in merchandize and wealth; you see Rome, the queen and empress of the world: On the north you see Syria whose king, Antiochus, once profaned the temple, and brought such evils on the Jews; you see Galilee whose fertility you know, and where you have hitherto lived in obscurity. Thus the devil pointed out to Jesus the kingdoms of the world and their grandeur. Macknight, with several others, is of opinion, that this prospect was confined to the land of promise; and that the mountain of Nebo, from whence Moses had a prospect of the whole land, was very probably that from whence the devil shewed our blessed Saviour all the kingdoms of the world, that is, the whole land of promise, for so the word is used, in the literal sense, at least of Romans iv. 13. By confining this prospect to the land of promise, the third temptation will appear to have had a peculiar force; the devil, that he might know whether Jesus was the Messiah, offered to give him all the kingdoms of the land to which the Messiah had an undoubted right. See Psalm ii. 8. lxxii. 8. he hoped thus to have enticed him to commit idolatry; thinking, if he was not the Messiah, he would eagerly embrace this as the speediest way of accomplishing his design.

Ver. 12. Now when Jesus had heard, &c.] John the Baptist was not imprisoned till after the temptation of Jesus Christ; between these two events there happened what is related in the three first chapters of St. John's Gospel, it is commonly supposed that the ministry of John the Baptist lasted

but about eighteen months at most, and that he was in prison a year after Jesus Christ's baptism. We will just transcribe out of St. John's Gospel for the sake of connection what is here omitted in the history of Christ, he went from Nazareth into Judea where he was baptised by John, Mark i. 9. from Judea he returned into Galilee, John i. 43. ii. 1. he went again into Judea and there celebrated the passover at Jerusalem, John ii. 13. he baptised in Judea while John was baptising at Enon, John iii. 22. All this time John was at liberty. Ib. ver. 24. But the Pharisees having conspired against Jesus, John iv. 3. and Jesus hearing that John had been put into prison by Herod Antipas Tetrarch of Gallilee, Mark i. 14. Jesus went into Gallilee. See L'Enfant, instead of he departed in this verse, Dr. Waterland reads *he retired*.

Ver. 13. And leaving Nazareth.] Namely, when they had wholly rejected his word, and even attempted to kill him. See Luke iv. 29. and the parallel places; and for an explanation of the next verses, the note on Isai. ix. 1, 2. and Mede's Works, p. 101, 102. Christ chose Capernaum for the place of his residence, as being a large city, and where he was likely to bring numbers of people to the knowledge of his gospel. See ch. xi. 23. For an account of the Lake of Gennasareth and the fruitfulness of the neighbouring country, see Josephus' Jewish War, b. iii. c. xviii.

Ver. 18. And Jesus walking, &c.) Respecting the calling of Peter, &c. see the notes on Mark i. Instead of *fishers*, Dr. Waterland reads *fishermen*. It appears from John i. 35. that they had already acknowledged Jesus for the Messiah, upon the testimony of John the Baptist. Ver. 23. Synagogues.] It is manifest from Acts xv. 21. that there have been of a long time synagogues in each city, and that the
Jews

Jews were accustomed to meet therein every sabbath day. These synagogues had several heads and officers, who performed different functions: That of the Scribes was to teach and instruct the congregation; but it is evident, from Acts xiii. 15. that after the reading of the law and the prophets, the heads of the synagogue desired such learned and grave persons as happened to be there to make a discourse to the people; and by virtue of this custom it was, that Jesus Christ and St. Paul were allowed to preach in the synagogues: Acts ix. 20. xiv. 1. See L'Enfant and Beaufobre, and the authors referred to on chap. iii. 7.

REFLECTIONS ON OUR LORD'S TEMPTATIONS, &c.

To have a just notion of this extraordinary event, we must consider it in two lights. First, as it was permitted by God. Secondly, as it was executed by the tempter.

The reasons for which God permitted his Son to be tempted of the devil, were such as these: First, that he might become a faithful and merciful high priest, one who can succour his people in time of need, and pity them when they happen to fall by temptation. The apostle assigns this reason expressly, Heb. ii. 17, 18. iv. 15. Second, That his example might be a complete pattern of all the virtues: Jesus, like a wise and valiant general, underwent himself, all the hardships attending his service, that we his soldiers might be animated to sustain them together with him. He has gone before us, not only in poverty and reproach, and contempt of sensual pleasure, but was given up to be tempted of the devil, that his people might not be dismayed by such dispensations of providence, but be taught to expect them, especially

especially after having had proofs of the divine love and manifestations of his presence. Also that we might know both what sort of an enemy we have to encounter, and the kind of temptations he will assault us with; particularly that there is no impiety or wickedness so gross but he will tempt even the best of men to commit it.

Farther, it was designed to shew us, that the devil, though a strong enemy, may be overcome, and by what means; and to stir us up to constant watchfulness. Hence this conflict, though managed in the sight of God and the angels only, was in due time made public for the instruction of mankind. Third, That our Lord might with the greatest advantage begin and carry on his ministry, in the course of which he was to accomplish the salvation of men; it was necessary he should first vanquish the strongest temptations of the old serpent, who had formerly brought ruin on mankind.

On the other hand, the motives which induced the devil to undertake this temptation might be: First, his general desire of seducing men to sin. Secondly, some particular end which he proposed to accomplish thereby. It is reasonable to believe that God's gracious intention to save the world by his Son, was not entirely concealed from the evil spirits. If so, they might be led by the prophecies to conjecture, that this was the period fixed in the decrees of heaven for the advent of God's Son. That the devils are acquainted with the scripture is evident from the citation which we find the tempter making out of the Psalms on this occasion. Besides, they might be confirmed in their opinion by the general expectation of the Messiah, with which the east was now filled. If therefore they had any how received intelligence of the wonderful things
which

which accompanied the birth of Christ; or, having been witnesses to the descent of the spirit upon him at his baptism; some of them had heard the voice from heaven declaring him the Son of God; they could not but have a great curiosity to know whether he was really the grand personage so long expected by men. Wherefore all the time Jesus was in the wilderness, the chief of the evil spirits as being best qualified for the undertaking, beset him with a multitude of temptations, in order, if possible, to discover who he was: The form in which two of his temptations run, seems to favour this conjecture, if thou be the Son of God command that this stone be made bread. If thou be the son of God, cast thyself down from hence. Besides, unless the tempter had been in doubt as to the character of Jesus, it is not to be imagined that he should have attempted to seduce him at all.

CHAP. V.

Ver. 1. And seeing the multitudes.] Doddridge is of opinion that this discourse was different from, and previous to that which St. Luke has given us in the sixth chapter of his gospel, though many of the sentiments and expressions are the same. It is however more generally thought that these discourses are the same. And it appears from Luke vi. 12. 17. that our Saviour having gone up to the top of the mountain to pray; coming down from thence he stood on a plain and even part of the same mountain from whence he could easily be heard. So Moses first ascended Mount Sinai alone, and afterwards accompanied by the elders, from whence the law was promulged by God. Jesus sat down, according to the custom of the Jewish doctors, when they taught. His disciples, mean, not merely the twelve apostles, who were not yet chosen under that character,

rafter, but all those in general who followed Jesus Christ. See Luke vi. 13. John ix. 27. and in most places in the Acts, the Christians are called Disciples.

Ver. 2. And he opened his mouth.] In order to enter into the beauty of this discourse it is necessary to consider it as addressed, not merely to the apostles, but to Christ's disciples in general, and to vast numbers of people, who, affected with the sight or fame of his miracles, were now assembled around him; probably expecting that he would immediately declare himself the Messiah, and full of those false notions of his kingdom, which so generally prevailed. Mr. Blair in his excellent discourse on this sermon has shewn beyond all others how directly the beginning of it is levelled against those prejudices: calculated, as the whole of it is, to correct these erroneous notions of the Messiah's kingdom, which were so common and which would prove so pernicious to those who were governed by them. He has also observed, as it is very necessary to do, what a beautiful correspondence there is between the characters described in these beatitudes and the blessings connected with them. Jesus began his sermon with the doctrine of happiness; a subject which the teachers of wisdom have always considered as the principal thing in morals; and for that reason they have laboured to give their true disciples an idea of it. Most of the Jews seem to have considered the enjoyments of sense, as the sovereign good, riches, mirth, revenge, women, conquest, liberty, fame and other things of the same kind afforded them such pleasures that they wished for no better in the Messiah's kingdom, which they all considered as a secular one: Even the disciples themselves who afterwards were made apostles, long retained this notion of a temporal kingdom; having followed their master first with a view to the honours, profits and pleasures attending the

the posts which they expected under him. Therefore, to shew his hearers in general, and his disciples in particular, the grossness of their error, our Lord declared that the highest happiness of men consisteth in the graces of the spirit, because from the possession and exercise of them, the purest pleasures result: Pleasures, which satisfy the great God himself, and constitute his ineffable felicity. See Wetstein, Doddridge and Macknight.

It may be proper before we enter upon this discourse, to observe once for all, that whoever examines the discourses of our Lord with attention, may find in them a certain character and way of speaking, in a great measure peculiar to himself. This manner, by which our Saviour's discourses are distinguishable, consists in raising matter of instruction and moral reflection from the objects which presented themselves to him and his audience while he was speaking. Hence his sermons to the multitude, and his conversation with his disciples, allude perpetually to the time of the year, to the place where he is, to the objects that surround him, to the occupation and circumstances of those whom he addresses, or to the state of public affairs, &c. Thus the blessed Jesus in the spring went into the fields, where he sat down on an eminence, and made this discourse, which is full of observations arising from things which presented themselves to his view. Hence, when he exhorts his disciples to trust in God, he bids them behold, [*εμβεβατε,*] look upon the birds of the air, which were then flying about them, and were fed by providence, though they did not sow, nor reap, nor gather into barns. Consider, says our blessed Lord, ver. 28. take notice of the lilies of the field, which were then blown and were so beautifully clothed by the

the same power, and yet toiled not like the husbandmen, who were then at work. Being in a place where they had a prospect of a cultivated land, he bad them observe how God caused the sun to shine, and the rain to descend upon the fields and gardens, even of the wicked and ungrateful; and he continued to convey his doctrine to them under rural images; speaking of good trees, and corrupt trees; of knowing men by their fruits; wolves in sheeps clothing; grapes not growing upon thorns, nor figs on thistles; of the folly of casting precious things to dogs and swine; of good measure pressed down and shaken together, and running over, and a variety of other particulars which will occur to every reader's observation. From this peculiarity in the stile and genius of our Saviour's discourses, we may conclude that the writers of the gospel have given us always the substance and often the very words of our Lord's sermons; and we may also plainly see in the discourses of Jesus Christ his great design—which was to instruct; therefore he conveys knowledge in a familiar way: He adapts his language to his hearers. He speaks to their eyes and to their ears. He chooses images and comparisons which would strike them most powerfully and make the most lasting impression upon their minds. See Jortin's discourses, p. 212. and not in ver. 14.

Ver. 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit, happy, &c.] Doddridge: And so throughout the beatitudes; I use the word happy, rather than blessed, says he, as more exactly answering to *Μεγαρία* as the word blessed does to *εὐλαμμένοι*: and I the rather chuse to render it thus, because our Lord seems to intimate by it, not only that the dispositions here recommended would be the way to future blessedness, but that they would immediately be attended with the trust happiness,

pinefs and the moft noble pleasures; in order to
 render his hearers more attentive, Chrift propofes
 his doctrine in certain paradoxical dogmas which
 at firft appearance may feem falfe to the vulgar eye,
 but are found moft true by the attentive confiderer.
 St. Luke applies this firft beatitude to the poor,
 properly fo called, but though poverty of fpirit
 may include a difpofition which bears poverty
 rightly, there feems no doubt that it here primarily
 refers to humility of heart. Dr. Heylin's, feems the
 true interpretation. The phrafe, fays he, the poor
 in fpirit expreffes an inward difpofition or ftate of
 mind, by an outward worldly circumftance; name-
 ly, poverty, which fignifies want; the fenfe whereof
 obliges men to a dependance upon others for fup-
 ply, by begging or fervitude: So by exact analogy,
 poverty of fpirit implies want, and confequently an
 habitual addrefs to, and dependance upon God for
 fupply, by prayer and obedience. The beatitude there-
 fore may be thus paraphrafed, " You naturally con-
 gratulate the rich and the great, and expect, under
 the reign of the Mefſiah, to be advanced to wealth,
 dignity and power; but your notions of thefe things
 are very falfe and viciated; for I fay unto you,
 happy are the poor in fpirit; thefe humble fouls,
 who, deeply confidering their ignorance and guilt,
 can quietly refign to the divine teaching and dif-
 pofals, and accommodate themſelves to the loweft
 circumftances which Providence ſhall appoint them:
 For, howfoever they may be deſpifed and trampled on
 by men, their's is the kingdom of Heaven. They
 will be moft likely to embrace the Gofpel, and they
 alone will be intitled to its moft important bleffings,
 both in time and eternity." See Doddridge, Wet-
 ſtein, and Bengelius.

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Ver.

Ver. 4. Blessed are they that mourn,] “ Either for their own sins, or for other men’s, and who are steadily and habitually serious, they shall be comforted most solidly and deeply in this world and eternally in heaven. What they now sow in tears, they shall reap in joy; their tears shall wash away their guilt, and their innocence be crowned with perpetual felicity.” See 1 Cor. v. 2. and Bengelius. Possibly our Saviour might refer still farther in this blessing to the mourning rightly improved on account of afflictions; and in this light nothing can be more true than the present aphorism; because if any thing brings a man to virtue, it is affliction; the natural tendency thereof being to give him a feeling of the vanity of the world, and consequently to convince him how necessary it is, that he should seek his happiness in things more solid and durable. Affliction awakens serious thoughts in the mind, composes it into a grave and settled frame, very different from the levity which prosperity inspires; gives it a fellow-feeling of the sorrows of others, and makes it sensible of the evil of departing from God, the source and center of its joy. See Macknight.

Ver. 5. Blessed are the meek.] That is, the men of mild and forgiving tempers, who hold all their passions and affections even; they shall inherit the earth; they shall enjoy the protection of civil government with the blessings of the present life, the greatest and best of which flow from meekness itself. Meekness consisting in the moderating of our passions, makes a person beautiful and venerable in the eyes of others, so that he possesses their inward esteem; while the man devoid of this grace is despicable, though dignified with ever so many titles of honour. Hence it is called the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit. Further, this grace secures

a man

a man against many injuries to which he may be exposed; a soft answer being powerful to put away wrath; or if an injury is done to a meek person, his meekness prevents the storm which pride, anger and revenge raise within; enables him to bear the injury with tranquility, and strengthens him to overcome it with good. Thus much seems to be implied in the blessings annexed to the character in this verse; which is a citation from Psal. xxxvii. 11. and seems to be produced to shew of how great price the ornament of a good and quiet spirit is in the sight of God; for the words immediately put us in mind, that under the dispensation wherein God rewarded virtue with temporal advantages, he annexed the highest blessing, even that of inheriting the promised land to the lovely grace of meekness.

Ver. 6. Blessed are they that do hunger, &c.] Our Saviour uses the ideas of hunger and thirst metaphorically to express vehement desire. By righteousness seems to be meant that holiness which the gospel teaches and recommends, in opposition to the righteousness of Scribes and Pharisees. So that the persons here said to hunger and thirst, are those who earnestly wish for, and are sensible of the want of that salvation which is procured by Jesus Christ. This beatitude therefore may be thus paraphrased: "Happy are they, who, instead of desiring insatiably the possessions of others, and endeavouring to obtain them by violence or deceit, eagerly hunger and thirst after righteousness, and make it the delightful business of life to improve in all the branches of evangelical virtue and goodness. For they shall never be disappointed in these pious pursuits, but be abundantly satisfied with the righteousness they seek, and be competently supplied with every necessary good."

they shall see God: Thus purified and refined they shall enjoy him in his ordinances, and in all the communications of his grace here, and dwell with him for ever in heaven.

Ver. 9. Blessed are the peace-makers.] Suicer's Thesaurus under *εἰρηνοποιός*, and the note on 2 Cor. iii. 18. Other expositors suppose that this beatitude refers only to those who are of a peaceable disposition, but is opposed to men of hostile and warlike minds; and therefore they paraphrase it thus: "Warriors and conquerors, the disturbers of the peace of mankind, are by no means happy in their victories, nor they who love to involve others in quarrels for their own purposes; but They are happy who, loving peace, promote it to the utmost of their power, *they shall be called the children of God*. Having rendered themselves like to God, by imitating his greatest perfection, they shall be acknowledged by him as his children, and admitted to a participation of his happiness: an honor, which those who take pleasure in war, however eminent they may be for courage, shall certainly miss, though it be the aim of their ambition; because they pursue it not by the god-like disposition of diffusing happiness, but by spreading desolation and death among their fellow-creatures. So that, having divested themselves of the nature of God, they have no title to be *called his sons*."

Ver. 10. Blessed are they which are persecuted, &c.] One would imagine that a person of the amiable temper and behaviour described in the last mentioned beatitude, would be the darling of mankind; but our Lord well knew it would not be so as long as satan was the prince of this world; he therefore warns them beforehand of the treatment all were to expect who were determined thus to tread

tread in his steps, by subjoining, *happy are they who are persecuted for righteousness sake.* "Instead of those pomps and pleasures, and those victories and triumphs, in expectation of which you may now be crowding around me; my followers must prepare themselves for the severity of suffering, and courageously endure the greatest extremities for the testimony of their consciences; for the cause of true righteousness and virtue. Their richest treasure is beyond the reach of their most inveterate enemies, for they shall reign with God in everlasting glory.

Ver. 11, 12. Blessed are ye when men shall revile, &c.] Macknight understands this as a distinct beatitude from that in the 10th verse supposing the former to refer to liberty and external ease; the present to reputation: And accordingly he paraphrases it thus: Fame, or the applause of the world, does not give perfect contentment by satisfying true ambition; but to be *reviled falsely* in the ways of righteousness, and to share in affronts with and for God, is a dignity which yields infinitely greater joy, and is that by which the saints and prophets have been distinguished in all ages." Instead of, *be exceeding glad*, in verse 12. *Ἀγαλλιασθε*, would be properly rendered, *triumphantly exult*, or *leap for joy*. See Luke i. 14.

Ver. 13. Ye are the salt of the earth.] This relates to all the disciples who were there present, Luke xiv. 34. and also to all Christians in general (1 Thessl. v. 5. Phillip. ii. 15.) but more especially to the apostles. See on verse 16. Salt is the emblem of wisdom, and it serves also to preserve things from putrefaction. Now, the first disciples of Christ were more especially appointed to diffuse the wisdom of the gospel throughout the whole world,

world, and to promote virtue and holiness among men by their doctrines and examples; the meaning is, "Who could instruct and reform you, if you should happen to fall into error or vice; you that are to be entrusted with the sanctification and instruction of others? Com. Mark ix. 49. Colos. iv. 6. Livy calls Greece *Sal Gentium*.

Ver. 15. Neither do men light a candle.] The meaning of this comparison is the same with that of the foregoing. The Disciples and Christians being the lights of the world, were designed to light men out of the ways of ignorance and vice into the paths of holiness and virtue. "Men do not so much as light a common lamp to put it under a bushel and conceal it there; but they set it on a stand to give light to all who are in the house. How much less will it become you whom I have compared to the sun, to hide or suppress your rays, the knowledge of divine things is given you, not to be concealed but to be imparted to mankind around you; therefore, ver. 16. *Let your light, &c.*" That is, "Make your doctrine and example bright in the eyes of all who behold you; that they may honour God, First, by acting up to the precepts of the gospel, strongly impressed on their understandings by your penetrating sermons, and powerfully recommended to their hearts by your exemplary lives: next, by their returning thanks to God for sending such men to enlighten and reform the world; for to glorify God is not only to praise him, (as Luke ii. 20. and elsewhere), but also to acknowledge the truth of the gospel. See Luke xxiii. 47. 1 Pet. ii. 12. this expression includes edification as opposed to the giving offence.

Ver. 17. 20. Think not that I am come to destroy, &c.] Because the doctrine of Jesus Christ
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concerning happiness, was contrary to that which the Jews, were accustomed to hear, and which their preachers pretended to derive from the prophets whose descriptions of the glory of the Messiah's kingdom they understood in a literal sense, also because he was about to give explanations of the moral precepts of very different tenor from those which the Scribes and Pharisees commonly gave, but which his disciples, as instructors of mankind, were to inculcate; he ended this branch of his discourse, and introduced that which followed, with declaring that *he was by no means come to destroy the law or the prophets, i. e. the moral precepts contained in them, for he came to destroy the whole ceremonial precepts of the law the hand writing of ordinances which he blotted out and nailed to his Cross that its abolition might be known to all.* See Col. ii. 14. Besides we find the phrase *law and prophets* made use of elsewhere to signify the moral precepts contained in them. See ch. vii. 12. 22. 40. *think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy but to fulfil; — πληρῶσαι, to confirm, for so the word is used, 1 Kings i. 14. in the margin.* Accordingly, it follows: Ver. 18. *Verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth, &c. Eternity and mutability are by no means the attributes of any ceremonial precept whatever. They are the distinguishing characters of the precepts of morality enjoined in the law and the prophets. None of them shall pass or be abrogated till all be fulfilled: ἵνα ἂν πάντα γένηται.* "Till all the things mentioned be done;" i. e. till the heavens and the earth *pass*, or are destroyed. Our Lord's meaning therefore, is that there is nothing in the universe so stable as the eternal truths of morality: the heavens may fall, the whole frame of nature

nature be unhinged; nay, every part of it be dissolved; but the rules of righteousness shall remain immutable and immortal: Wherefore he ordered his disciples, on the severest penalties both by their doctrine and example, to enforce the strict observation of all the moral precepts contained in the sacred writings, and that to their utmost extent: verse 19. Whosoever therefore shall *break*, that is, destroy (*λύσαι*, being here put for *καταλύσαι*, as it is likewise, John ii. 18.) *one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so*, shall be called; i. e. shall be, —the least in the kingdom of Heaven. Our divine teacher, adds, verse 20. “*Except your righteousness, the righteousness which you practice yourselves and enjoin upon others shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, —the Jewish doctors of the strictest sects; ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of Heaven*; for, ye like them will be corruptors of others, and consequently monsters of the blackest kind. But because this was a subject of great importance, our Lord goes on to specify various particulars, wherein theirs should excel the doctrine and practices of the Jewish teachers. This appears to be the true and proper explanation of this passage; and from the whole of what follows, it is manifest that Christ refers to the moral, and not the ceremonial law; for he doth not give a single instance from the latter. Dr. Heylin observes very well, that it clearly appears from these verses that our Lord certainly foresaw the great abuses which would be made of his religion; how some would think they might compensate for the neglect of moral duties by deeds of superstition, and will-worship; and how others glorying in their presumptuous assurances, would contradistinguish faith from morality; and by taking away the law, which is the
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only true foundation, of all religion, leave Christianity a mere castle in the air, an enthusiastic system of absurdities. Christ therefore solemnly, and with great emphasis asserts the perpetual obligation of the law till nature itself should be so changed as to render its dictates useless. In the present course of things the law is so far from abating or being abrogated in any essential point of duty, that, on the contrary, all who faithfully practice the law, find by experience that it increases, and spreads its jurisdiction further, in proportion to the progress they make; for the moral sense greatly improves by exercise, and as men advance in their obedience of the law, they also advance in the knowledge of it; so as to discover new duties and stricter obligations whereof they had not been before sensible, and these too must be faithfully complied with and persevered in, before we can be qualified for that superior discipline which is peculiar to the doctrine of Christ: *Unless, says he, your justice shall surpass, &c.*

Ver. 21. It was said by them of old time] To them, &c. Wat. and so wherever it occurs. *It was said to them of former time—But I say to you:* So our Lord introduces his several improvements of the law under the different articles hereafter specified. Christ here distinguishes his doctrines from those, which in former times had been publicly taught and enforced by the authority of law; for as there is a gradual increase of knowledge in every man who faithfully practices what he knows already; so by divine appointment, it has proved in the the course of the world. Natural religion was the general rule of life, till Moses, who gave the revealed law, which bears his name, and was the standard of duty till the coming of Christ; whose instructions are the completion of all that appertains

tains to moral rectitude : Upon which account the season of his dispensation is called *the last days*, as the ages preceding are here named *the former time*. Jesus Christ instances in the commandments of the second table, how the Jews had *corrupted the word of God by their traditions* ; and he proposes here these commandments in the same sense as they were understood by the Pharisees, and sometimes with the glosses they put upon them ; and from these it is he endeavours to vindicate and rescue them. He begins with the sixth commandment. It seems, the doctors gave it as their opinion, that this law, *thou shalt not kill*, prohibited nothing but actual murder committed with a man's own hand ; and therefore, if he hired another to kill him or turned a wild beast upon him, that slew him,—according to them it was not murder, punishable by the law, though they acknowledged it might deserve the judgment of God. The doctrine of Christ's disciples was to be more sublime exhibiting the intention and spirit of the law, which forbids our *being angry* with another, our affronting him, and judging evil concerning his spiritual estate without good reason ; for the limitation added the first member of the sentence, verse 22. must be understood throughout the whole. It may be proper to observe, that by *the judgment*, is meant that court of judicature amongst the Jews, which consisted of twenty-three judges who had power of life and death ; so that the meaning of the words, *he shall be in danger of, or liable to be punished by the judgment*, is “ he shall be guilty of death.” Deut. xvi. 18. 21. 2. But it is to be noted here, that though Jesus Christ makes use of the same expressions as were used by the Jews to denote temporal punishments, yet his words are to be figuratively understood, and applied to the future punishments of the wicked, of which

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he distinguishes the different degrees, according to the different crimes. See Grotius, and L'Enfant.

Ver. 22. But I say unto you.] The word *Judgment* here unquestionably must signify punishment from God; since this causeless anger might be so concealed in the heart, as not to admit of conviction before men. "He shall be liable to a worse punishment from God, than any which your common courts of judicature can inflict." See the note on ver. 21. Our Saviour goes on, "Whosoever to his secret anger shall add opprobrious and contemptuous words,—for instance, *shall say to his brother, Raca, that is, thou worthless, empty fellow!* shall be exposed to yet more terrible effects of the Divine judgment, and be obnoxious to a yet severer punishment; as far exceeding the former, as that inflicted by the Sanhedrin, which extends to stoning, exceeds that which follows the judgment of the inferior courts, which only have the power of the sword." *Raca* is a Syriac word, which, according to Lightfoot, signifies a scoundrel; according to Drusus, a Coxcomb; and so is a term of great contempt. *Kari*, *vain man*, used James ii. 20. seems to be a translation of it; for, as St. Jerome observes, it is derived from the Hebrew קריק, which signifies *vain* or *empty*. See Parkhurst on the word. *The council*—, in the Greek συνέδριον, a word which the Jews adopted into their language, giving it an Hebrew termination, *Sanhedrin*—, signifies the council or senate of the nation. It consisted of seventy-two judges, or, according to others, of seventy besides the president. It used to sit at Jerusalem. Concerning the place where it met, see John xix. 13. This was the supreme court of judicature among the Jews, and to it ap-
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peals were made from inferior tribunals. It took cognizance only of the most important matters; as, for instance, such wherein a whole tribe was concerned; those that related to the high-priest, a false prophet, idolatry, treason, &c. and could, while the republic lasted, inflict the heaviest punishments; particularly stoning, and burning with melted lead poured down the throat of the criminal after he was strangled. See L'Enfant, and Calmet's dictionary. Our Saviour goes on, "Who-soever, in his unruly passion, shall say to his brother, thou fool [*Μωρε*] i. e. Thou graceless wicked villain;—thereby impeaching his moral character, as well as reflecting on his intellectual; shall be obnoxious to the Gehenna of fire; or, to a future punishment, more dreadful even than being burned alive in the valley of Hinnon; from whence the name of the infernal regions is borrowed.

The valley of Hinnon, called also Tophet, was the scene of the detestable worship of Moloch, as we have before observed, 2 Kings xxiii. 10. See also Isai. xxx. 33. In after times continual fires were kept in this valley, for burning the unburied carcases and filth of the city, that, being thus polluted, it might be unfit for the like religious abominations. The Jews, from the perpetuity of these fires, and to express the utmost detestation of the sacrifices which were offered to Moloch in this valley, made use of its name to signify *hell*, of which they conceived it a fit emblem. Hence our translators have given *Tophet* or *Gehenna*, its metaphorical meaning in the present passage, whereas it ought rather to have had its literal signification; for our Lord, intending to shew his hearers that the punishment of causeless anger, contemptuous
speeches,

speeches, and abusive names, shall, in the life to come, bear a proportion to the guilt that is in these sins; and finding no means in the language of men, by which those different degrees of punishment could properly be expressed, he illustrated them by the punishment wherewith the Jews were acquainted. This interpretation of the punishment in the latter clause of the verse, has a particular advantage attending it, as it prevents the reader from imagining, that only the sin of calling his brother *fool* will be punished with hell-fire. See Lightfoot and Macknight. St. Austin observes, that here is a gradation in the faults reprehended. The first is anger, deliberately and causelessly conceived in the mind; the second when that breaks forth in wrathful expressions; the third when it vents itself in contumelious abuses. It is by these steps, that a man enraged with anger, sometimes proceeds to actual murder, but much oftener to the commission of it in his thought and intention; and we are here warned that all these steps are criminal in their several degrees, and that the law not only prohibits murder, but even the remotest tendencies toward it.

Ver. 23. 24. Therefore, if thou bring thy gift,] Further to quench the first and smallest sparks of enmity, and prevent all occasion of angry resentments, our Lord adds what follows from this to the 26th verse, for so far his advice extends, with regard to the sixth commandment; because men are so very apt to fall into rash anger, and to express their anger by contemptuous speeches and abusive names, fancying that there is no sin in these things, or but little, and that compensation may easily be made for them by acts of devotion,

Jesus declared that atonement was not to be made for these offences by any offerings, how costly soever, and therefore prescribed immediate repentance and reparation, as the only remedies of them. He insisted particularly on reparation, assuring us, that unless it be made, God will not accept the worship of such offenders; being infinitely better pleased with repentance than with sacrifices, or external worship of any kind, how precious soever those duties may appear in the eye of vulgar understandings. Vain, therefore, is their presumption, who fancy they can make amends for yet more gross acts of injustice, by acts of devotion: "Therefore if thou bring thy gift, *δραγον*—thy free-will offering, to the altar, and there recollect thy brother hath aught against thee,—any just cause of complaint; leave there thy gift before the altar:—Do not lay aside the thoughts of worshipping God, because thou art not in a proper state, but prepare thyself for his worship without delay; go thy way; first be reconciled;" &c. It is observed that Philo, in explaining the law of the trespass offering, tells us, that when a man hath injured his brother, and repenting his faults, voluntary acknowledged it, (in which case both restitution and sacrifice were required) he was first to make restitution, and then to come into the temple, presenting his sacrifice, and asking pardon. This is a very just and natural account of the matter, and adds a great illustration to this text. See Macknight and Doddridge.

Ver. 27, 28. Ye have heard, &c.] What hath been hitherto said refers to meekness; what now follows, to purity of heart. Dr. Lightfoot, to explain the opinion of the Jewish doctors, respecting
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the duty of this seventh commandment, cites the Targum upon Exod. xx. by which it appears, that they were very loose moralists indeed. In opposition therefore to them, our Lord declared, *that whosoever looketh on a woman, &c.* whosoever cherishes unchaste desires and intentions, or, as it is expressed in the tenth commandment, *covets his neighbour's wife*, is really guilty of adultery, though he should never find the opportunity of committing the act with her; for which cause, all such use of our senses, as inflames the mind with lust, must be carefully avoided. See on the next verse, Ecclus. ix. 5. &c. xxli. 1. xlii. 12. The general meaning is, "Deny thyself the use of thy senses though ever so delightful, in all cases where the use of them ensnares thy soul. Turn away thine eye, and keep back thy hand from the alluring object." This, says Chrysostome, is a most mild and easy precept: It would have been much more hard, had he given commandment to converse with, and look curiously on women, and then to abstain from further commission of uncleanness with them.

A superficial reader will find his imagination shocked at the bare proposal of *pulling out an eye*, or *cutting off an hand*, being not aware, that by the eye is meant the intention, and by the hand the execution of it.

Ver. 31, 32. It has been said, &c.] It hath been said, &c.—Bill of divorce: ver. 32. But, &c.—except in the case of adultery, occasions her being an adulteress. Wat. The orators of the School of Sommaï affirmed, that in the law concerning divorce, Deut. xxiv. 1. the words, some uncleanness, were to be understood of adultery
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only; Whereas they of the school of Hillel interpreted them of any manner of dislike whatever. Hence the Pharisees asked Jesus, ch. xix. 3. If it was lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? The opinion of Hillel was generally espoused by the Jews, as appears both from their practice and their writings. Thus Malachi ii. 16. the clause which in our translation runs, *The Lord says he hateth putting away*, i. e. divorces on frivolous pretences, is by the Chaldee paraphrast and the LXX rendered, If thou hatest, thou shouldest put her away: Also the son of Sirach, Eccles. xxv. 26. If she go not as thou wouldest have her, cut her off from thy flesh; and Josephus Antiq. l. 4. c. 8. "He that would be disjoined from his wife, for any cause whatever, as many such causes there may be among men, let him give her a bill of divorce." Nay, one of their doctors delivered it as his opinion, "That a man may put away his wife, if he likes any other woman better." As therefore they had perverted the law of divorce, that they might give full scope to their lusts, Jesus thought fit to reduce it to its primitive meaning; assuring them, that he who divorces his wife for any of the causes allowed by the doctors, whoredom excepted, layeth her under a strong temptation to commit adultery; unjust divorce being no divorce in the sight of God: and that since such marriages still subsisted, he who married the woman unjustly divorced, committeth adultery also. See Macknight, Calmet, and the note on 1 Cor. vii. 15.

Ver. 33. 37. Again, ye have heard, &c.] As to oaths the doctors affirmed, that they were obligatory, according to the nature of the things by which

which a man swears. See ch. xxiii. 16. Hence they allowed the use of such oaths in common conversation as they said were not obligatory; pretending that there was no harm in them, because the law which forbade them to forswear themselves, and enjoined them to perform their vows, meant such solemn oaths only, as were of a binding nature. It is this detestable morality which Jesus condemned in ver. 34. 36. By comparing ch. xxiii. 16. it appears that our Lord is here giving a catalogue of oaths, which, in the opinion of the doctors, were not obligatory. His meaning, therefore is, "Swear not at all, unless you have a mind to perform; because every oath being really obligatory, he, who from an opinion that some are not, swears in common conversation by heaven, or by the earth, or by Jerusalem, or by his own head, is, without all doubt, guilty of perjury. Much more is he guilty, who, when called thereto by lawful authority, swears with an intention to falsify." Jesus by no means condemns swearing truly before a magistrate, or upon grave and solemn occasions, because that would have been to prohibit both the best method of ending controversies, Heb. vi. 16. and an high act of religious worship, Deut. vi. 13. Isai. lxy. 16. An oath being not only a solemn appeal to the divine Omniscience, from which nothing can be hid, but also a direct acknowledgment of God, as the great protector and pattern of right, and the avenger of falsehood. But let your communication, says he, be yes, yes; no, no: "Maintain such sincerity and truth in all your words, as will merit the belief of your acquaintance. So that in common conversation, to gain yourselves credit, you need do no more than barely assert or deny any matter, without invoking

invoking the name of God at all; for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil; or, as it may be translated, cometh of the evil one: *Ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ*, see ch. vi. 13." In common discourse, whatever is more than affirmation, or negation, ariseth from the temptation of the devil; who prompts men to curse and to swear, that he may lessen their reverence for God, and lead them at length to perjury, even in the most solemn instances: Considerations, which shew the evil nature of this sin in the strongest light. We may just observe, that the Jews have a Proverb among them to this purpose: "The yea of the just is yea, and their nay, nay." That is to say, they are sincere, and perform whatever they say or promise. See James, ver. 12. In whatever sense the last clause, cometh of evil, be understood, it contains a demonstration that the 34th verse is to be explained with the limitation proposed; for it is evident that oaths were in some cases not only allowed, but required by the Mosaic law. See Exod. xxii. 11. Lev. v. 1. Num. v. 19. 21. Deut. xxix. 12, 14. So that if Christ's prohibition here referred to swearing in solemn and judicial cases, he would in these words have charged the divine law with establishing an immorality; which is most absurd to suppose. See Macknight, Doddridge, and Wettstein.

Ver. 38. 42. Ye have heard, &c.] With respect to men's resisting and revenging such injuries as are done them, Jesus assured his disciples, that although for the preservation of society, Moses had ordained the Judges to give eye for eye, and tooth for tooth, if the injured party demanded it; yet the doctors were greatly in the wrong, not only when they enjoined men to insist on retaliation as their duty, but declared it lawful in many cases for the

the injured party to avenge himself with his own hand, provided, in his revenge he did not exceed the measure prescribed in the law. Christ's doctrine is, that the good man is so far from revenging private injuries, that often times he does not even resist them, and always forgives them when they happen to be done to him; a generosity which he warmly recommended to his disciples in the passage before us. To understand it aright we must take notice, that there are five cases put, wherein Christian meekness must especially shew itself: First, when any one assaults our person, in resentment of some affront which he imagines we have put upon him: Secondly, when any one sues us at the law, in order to take our goods from us: Thirdly, when he attacks our natural liberty: Fourthly, when one who is poor asks charity: Fifthly, when our neighbour begs the loan of something from us. In all these cases, our Lord forbids us to *resist*: Yet from the examples he mentions, it is plain, that this forbearance and compliance is required only when we are slightly attacked, but by no means when the fault is of a capital kind; for it would be unbecoming the wisdom which Jesus shewed in other points, to suppose that he forbids us to defend ourselves against murderers, robbers, and oppressors, who would unjustly take away our life, our estate, or our liberty: Neither can it be, that he commands us to give every idle and worthless fellow all he may think fit to ask, whether in charity or in loan: We are only to give what we can spare, and to such persons, as out of real necessity seek relief from us; nay, our Lord's own behaviour towards the man, who, in the presence of the council smote him on the cheek, gives reason to think he did not mean

mean that in all cases his disciples should be passive under the very injuries which he here speaks of. In some circumstances, *smiting on the cheek, taking away one's coat, and the compelling of him to go a mile*, may be great injuries, and therefore are to be resisted: The first instance was judged so by Jesus himself, in the case mentioned; for had he forbore to reprove the man who did it, his silence might have been interpreted as proceeding from a conviction of his having done evil, in giving the high-priest the answer for which he was smitten.

Allowing, therefore, that this rule has for its object small injuries, and that it orders us to be passive under them, rather than to repel them, it is liable to no objection: for he who bears a slight affront, consults his honour and interest much better than he who *resists* or *resents* it; because he shews a greatness of mind worthy of a man, and avoids quarrels, which frequently are attended with the most fatal consequences. In like manner, he who yields a little of his right, rather than go to law, is much wiser than the man who has recourse to justice in every instance; because in the progress of a law-suit such animosities may arise, as are inconsistent with charity. Again, benevolence, which is the glory of the divine nature, and the perfection of the human, rejoices in doing good; hence, the man possessed of this godlike quality cheerfully embraces every occasion in his power, of relieving the poor and distressed, whether by gift or loan. Some are of opinion that the precept concerning alms-giving, and gratuitous lending is subjoined to the instances of injuries which our Lord commands us to bear; to teach us, that if the persons who have injured us fall into want, we are not to withhold any act of charity from them,

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on account of the evil they have formerly done us. Taken in this light the precept is generous and divine. Moreover, as liberality is a virtue nearly allied to the forgiveness of injuries, our Lord joined the two together, to shew they should always go hand in hand: The reason is, revenge will blast the greatest liberality, and a covetous heart will shew the most perfect patience to be a sordid meanness of spirit, proceeding from selfishness. See Macknight, Blair and Blackall. The words *μὴ ἀντιστῆναι τῷ πονηρῷ*, are rendered by Dr. Doddridge. Do not set yourselves against the injurious person. See the force of the original word *ἀντιστῆναι*, 2 Tim. iii. 8. where to resist the truth is the same as to endeavour to destroy it; Rom. xii. 17. The word *ἀγγαρεύσει*, rendered compel, in verse 41. all the commentators have observed it derived from the name of those officers of public messengers amongst the Persians, who were wont to press the carriages and horses they met on the road if they had occasion for them, and even to force the drivers or riders to go along with them. See ch. xxvii. 32. Dr. Waterland very properly renders the word press. This custom was also in use in Judea, and the Roman empire. Among the Jews, the disciples of their wise men were excused from such services; but Christ advises his disciples not to insist on that exemption.

The essence of virtue consists in mental disposition in our temper and frame of mind; but as human language is adapted to express bodily action much better than mental disposition. It is usual to express the latter by the action it would naturally produce: and as the principles of action are complicated and various, and prudence or necessity may often oblige us to act differently from what the
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frame of our mind inclines to; hence it comes to pass, that some Evangelical councils, which prescribe an outward action mean in particular cases only the proper inward disposition, namely, a readiness and inclination to perform it: So that the will, though not formerly mentioned in the precept, is always required, and the deed, though nominally expressed, may on many occasions be omitted. For instance, it is said at ver. 42. Give to him who asketh thee, &c. Now this precept is, in the letter, and with regard to the outward act it commands, very often impossible, very often improper to be put in practice: but in the spirit of it, *i. e.* the disposition of heart which enjoins, it is always possible, always practicable, always obligatory: The narrowness of our own circumstances may make it impossible, or the circumstances of him who asks our bounty, may make it improper to put this precept into execution, as to the outward act: for we may be so poor ourselves, or the person who applies to us may, by his vices or other qualities be so circumstanced, that we either cannot or ought not to relieve him. But an inclination to assist him, and do him service, is always in our power: The poorest man may have in the good treasury of his heart, wherewithal to defray this universal debt of benevolence to all who ask or need his assistance; and thus the precept will be virtually fulfilled; *i. e.* the virtue of the act will be imputed to him, as the disposition which would produce it. So again, when our Lord commands us not to resist the man who injures us, &c. his meaning is, That we should not repel and strive against the occasions of suffering which occur in the order of Providence, but readily accept of every cross which comes in our way. Those who are capable of this

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lesson know full well how salutary sufferings are, and that it is not possible to carry on this purification without them.

Ver. 43. You have heard, &c.] It may be proper to note here in this last quotation, the manner of our Lord's quoting the doctrines which he chose to speak of. He does not say, Ye know that it was said, &c. as he would have done, if nothing but the written law had been in his eye; but he says, Ye have heard that it was said;—comprehending not only the law itself, but the explications of it, which the doctors pretended to have derived from the mouth of Moses by tradition. The page of the law referred to in the present case, is Lev. xix. 18. where the clause, *and hate thine enemy*, is not found. But the doctors pretended that it was deducible from the first part of the precept, which seems to limit forgiveness to Israelites: Besides, they supported their opinion by the tradition of the elders, and by the precepts concerning the idolatrous nations too rigidly understood. Hence their malevolence to all mankind but their own nation, was so remarkable, that the heathens took notice of it. “Their fidelity, says Tacitus, is inviolable, and their pity ready towards one another; but unto all others they bear an implacable hatred:” Hist. lib. v. cap. 5. and compare 1 Thess. ii. 15. Indeed, they were so excessively haughty, that they would not so much as salute a heathen or a Samaritan. None but brethren received the least mark of respect from them; a behaviour which rendered them odious to all mankind. They dishonoured God extremely, by pretending that his law countenanced such ferocity; the precepts upon which they laid so much stress, having no reference at all to the disposition which particular

persons among the Israelites were to bear to particular persons among the heathens. They only prescribed what treatment the Israelites were to give these nations as bodies politic, in which capacity it was most just they should be destroyed, because of their abominations, and because they might have tempted God's people to idolatry; Lev. xviii. 25. 28. But the Jews overlooking the reason of those precepts, extended them most absurdly to the heathens in general, nay, and to private enemies among their brethren also. In opposition to this narrow and abominable spirit, our Lord commands his disciples to shew benevolence, according to their power to every individual of the human species, without respect of country or religion; benevolence even to their bitterest enemies. See Macknight, Chemnitz, and the next verse.

Ver. 44. Which despitefully use you, &c.] Who falsely accuse, or traduce you, and persecute you, Wat. Doddridge renders it, who insult and persecute you. The particulars mentioned in this verse, are certainly the highest expression of enmity: for what can be worse than cursing and calumny, insults and persecutions? Yet we are commanded to love and bless, and do good to, and pray for our enemies, even while they persist in their enmity against us. This may seem contrary to the precept, Luke xvii. 3. where forgiveness seems to be enjoined only, on condition the injurious party repents: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him, and if he repent, forgive him: But the difficulty will disappear, when it is remembered, that in the two passages different persons and different duties are spoken of. In this sermon, the duty we owe to mankind in general, who injure us, is described; but in Luke we are told
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how we are to behave towards an offending brother; one with whom we are particularly connected, whether by ties of blood or friendship. The forgiveness we owe to mankind, is in the sermon said to consist in the inward affection of benevolence, civil language, and good office, such as we would have done to them had they never injured us, and hearty prayers; all which men may receive even while they may persist in their enmity; whereas the forgiveness due to a brother, implies that he be restored to the place in our friendship and affection which he held before he offended. But in order to this, his repentance is justly required; because, without a sense of his offence, and due evidence of his reformation, he is both unworthy and incapable of being restored. See Macknight, and note on chap. vi. 12.

Ver. 45. That you may be the children, &c.] Our blessed Saviour enforces the doctrine of loving our enemies, so far as to do them good, from the noblest of all considerations, that it renders men like God, who is good even to the evil and unthankful. "Being thus benevolent towards all, the bad as well as the good, you shall be like God, and so prove yourselves his genuine offspring; for he maketh his sun common to them who worship, and to them who contemn him; and suffers his rain to be useful both to the just and to the unjust; alluring the bad to repentance, and stirring up the good to thankfulness, by this universal and indiscriminate benignity of his providence."—"If you would imitate the Gods," says Seneca, "do services even to the ungrateful; for the sun shines even upon the wicked." To conquer one's passion, to refrain from revenge; not merely to raise, but even to assist and dignify a fallen enemy," says

Cicero, " is not only to be like the greatest men but like to God himself." *Hæc qui faciat non ego eum summis viris comparo, sed similitum Deo judico.* See his oration for Marcellus.

Ver. 47. And if ye salute.] The Jews embraced their own countrymen, and allowed them as brethren; but the Gentiles they thought unworthy of that honour. Jesus Christ teaches here his disciples to make his charity extend to all men. See Rom. xii. 17, 18. L'Enfant, and Wetstein. Dr. Waterland, instead of publicans, reads heathens, after a different version.

Ver. 48. Be ye therefore perfect, &c.] The precise meaning of the text, says bishop Sherlock, is " Let your love be universal, unconfined by partialities; and with respect to its objects, as large as God's is. Not that our love either to enemies or friends can be supposed in other respects, and as to the effects of it, to bear any proportion to the divine love." See discourse 13. vol. iii. The love to friends enjoined by the Scribes and Pharisees, was very imperfect: We are to labour after a more complete resemblance to God, by loving enemies. The same precept is therefore expressed in Luke, chap. xxxiv. by, Be ye merciful, as your father also is merciful.

CH A P. VI.

Ver. 1. Take heed that you do not your alms.] Your righteousness. Wat. Our translators have put alms in the text; but doubting, upon good grounds, whether that was the true reading, they have for alms put in the margin righteousness, *i. e.* justice, as it stands in the Vulgate; a reading supported with great authority from manuscripts, and commentaries

mentaries of ancient fathers upon the place. However, if this were a mere verbal criticism, it would less deserve to be insisted upon : But it seems much better, and more agreeable to the sense of the Evangelist, that instead of alms we read justice ; for the proper reward, not only of alms, but of every other virtue, will be forfeited, if a desire of worldly applause be our motive to the practice of them ; and therefore this first verse seems to be a general caution against vain glory in our good works, as what makes void the merit of all virtuous actions, which are here summed up as usual in the comprehensive name of righteousness or justice : This general caution our Lord applies in the sequel to the three principal branches into which that justice is divided ; namely, first, justice to our neighbour, by acts of kindness and beneficence ; for merely not to hurt him, when we can do him good, is not doing him justice. Secondly, justice to God by devotion ; and thirdly, justice to ourselves by mortification, ver. 16, &c. which three branches of justice our Lord here treats of severally. The righteousness which they preached, was to excel the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees in the manner set forth in the preceding chapter. Our Lord goes on to speak of the righteousness which the Jewish teachers practised ; shewing that his disciples, especially such of them as were instructors of others, ought to excel them in that respect also. The particulars which he mentions, though few, are of great importance ; namely, alms-giving, prayer, fasting, heavenly-mindedness, candid-judging, and self-reformation. The present chapter contains four parts ; first, the right intention and manner in giving alms, ver. 1—4. secondly, the right intention, manner, form, and pre-requisites of

of prayer, ver. 5—15. Thirdly, the right intention and manner of fasting, ver. 16—18. Fourthly, the necessity of a pure intention in all things, unmixed either with a desire of riches, or worldly care, and fear of want, ver. 19—34. This first verse is a general caution against vain-glory in any of our good works. Our Saviour does not forbid us to do works of this kind publicly; for on some occasions that cannot be avoided; but to do them publicly, with a view and design to be seen of men, and to be applauded for them. See Heylin, Wetstein, Bengelius, and Olearius.

Ver. 2. When thou doest thine alms.] When you do good offices. Heylin. The term ἐλεημοσύνη, which we render alms, has a much larger signification, and imports all acts of kindness by which we can benefit others. In all these our Lord warns us against ostentation, and the desire of applause; and not only that we should not seek the praise of others on such occasions, but also heedfully abstain from all vain-glorious reflections upon the good we have done; which advice he couches in those emphatical words, *Let not your left hand know what your right hand doth*: The phrase of sounding a trumpet before them, is generally thought to be a figurative expression, to represent their doing it in a noisy ostentatious way, as it is certain that, “to do a thing with the sound of a trumpet,” is sometimes used proverbially to express a public ostentation. However, it seems not improbable, that as the Jews were wont to assemble the people by the sound of a trumpet, (Joel ii. 15.) persons who affected the reputation of being extremely charitable, might sound a trumpet when they distributed their alms, on pretence, no doubt, of gathering the poor to receive them, while their real intention was
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to proclaim heir own good works, and to receive glory of men. See Beza, and Elfner.

Ver. 3. Let not thy left hand know, &c.] This is a kind of proverbial expression, which may be explained to this effect:—"Let no one, no, not even your most intimate acquaintance, know what you do; be ignorant of it yourself, if possible, or forget it immediately."

Ver. 6. Enter into thy closet.] A mind long practised in piety, can easily recollect itself in every place, and maintain devotion in the midst of a crowd; but the novice in Christianity should here understand our Lord literally, and take all proper occasions of being by himself in solitude. Thou when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and there enter into thyself by devout recollection; for the bodily retirement avails nothing, but in as much as it serves to promote the mental; which is a disposition essentially necessary to prayer, and sometimes difficult to beginners, by reason of the contrary habits which their minds have contracted, by living ever abroad, and being dissipated among sensible objects: But a sincere endeavour will soon help that frailty; if we faithfully bear in mind the fundamental truth in which our Lord here instructs us; namely, that the Almighty God is with us in our secret retirement.

Ver. 7. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions] *Μὴ βαττολογήσητε*, a word derived from one Battus, who was a great babbler. (See Ovid's Metamorph. ii. ver. 688.) and signifying, "to use a vain multiplicity and repetition of words." See Mintert, Beza, and Hammond. The word is very applicable to the devotions of the heathens. See 1 Kings, xviii. 26. Acts xix. 34. and the note on Callimachus's hymn to Diana, p. 54. The vain repetition

repetition which Christ here forbids his disciples to use in their prayers, is plainly such as proceed from an opinion that they *were to be heard for their much speaking*, after the manner of those heathens: This opinion implying a denial either of the power, or the knowledge, or goodness of him whom we worship, is highly injurious to him; and therefore repetitions in prayer flowing from it, are culpable; but repetitions proceeding from a deep sense of our wants, and which express a vehement desire of the divine grace, Jesus by no means prohibits; for he himself made use of such repetitions in his agony, when he prayed three several times with exceeding vehemence; yet, as St. Matthew remarks, using still the same words: and indeed nothing is more beneficial, than to persevere as long as possible in the same act of desire, and to renew it again and again with fresh zeal and intenseness.

Ver. 8. Be not ye therefore like them.] This argument would be forcible against all prayer in general, if prayer was considered only as a means of making our wants known to God; whereas it is no more than an act of obedience to our heavenly Father, who hath commanded us to pray to him, chap. vii. 7. and made it the condition of his favours; on expression of our trust in him, and dependance on his goodness, whereby we acknowledge, that all the benefits we receive came from him, and that we must apply to him for the attainment of them.

Ver. 9. After this manner therefore, pray ye.] Jesus Christ gives his disciples a form of prayer, as was usually done by the Jewish masters; John the Baptist had taught his disciples to pray, Luke xi. 1. It is to be observed, that this prayer is almost wholly taken out of the Jewish liturgies, and
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from them so well adapted by our Lord, as to contain all things which can be requested of God, with an acknowledgment of his Divine Majesty and of our dependance. This prayer consists of three parts, the *preface*, the *petition*, and the *conclusion*. First, the *preface*,—Our Father who art in heaven, lays a general foundation for prayer; comprising what we must first know of God, before we can pray in confidence of being heard. It likewise points out to us that faith, humility, and love of God, before we can pray in confidence of being heard. It likewise points out to us that faith, humility, and love of God and man, with which we are to approach God in prayer.

I. The name *Father*, besides teaching us that we owe our being to God, and pointing out his goodness and mercy in upholding us, expresses also his power to give us the things we ask, none of which can be more difficult than creation. Further, we are taught to give the great God the title of *Father*, that our sense of the tender relation in which he stands to us may be confirmed; our faith in his power and goodness strengthened, our hope of obtaining what we ask in prayer cherished, and our desire of obeying and imitating him quickened; for natural reason teaches, that it is disgraceful in children to degenerate from their parents, and that they commit a greater crime, than to disobey the just commands of an indulgent father. Secondly, again, we are directed to call him *our Father*, in the plural number, and that even in secret prayer; to put us in mind, that we are all brethren, the children of one common parent, and that we ought to love one another with *pure hearts fervently*; praying not for ourselves only, but for others: that God may give them likewise *daily bread*, the forgiveness

giveness of sins, and deliverance from temptation.

II. 1. Hallowed be thy name.] In these words *Hallowed be thy name* we pray, that the conception or thought of God should be so exalted in us, that all our thoughts may fall down before it, and be brought in subjection to it; that the names of grandeur, and riches, and voluptuous joy, may sink beneath the name of the Lord our God; may fade, and lessen, and vanish in his presence. This is *hallowing the name of God*, and treating it with the reverence it deserves: This is the end of all religion, and therefore first proposed in this divine prayer: The following petitions relate to the means of attaining it. Such is Dr. Heylin's interpretation. It may be proper however, for the satisfaction of the reader, to give that which is more generally received. Now the *name of God* signifies himself, his attributes and works; and to sanctify a thing is to entertain the highest notion of it, as true and great and good; and by our words and actions to testify that belief: See 1 Pet. iii. 15. Isai. viii. 13. In this view, the meaning of the petition is, "May thy existence be universally believed; thy perfections loved and imitated, thy works admired, thy providence revered and confided in. May we and all men so think of the divine Majesty, and of his attributes and works, and may we and they so express our veneration of God, that his glory may be manifested every where, to the utter destruction of idols and devils. See Erasmus, Barrow, Macknight, &c.

Ver. 10. Thy kingdom come.] What we desire or pray for in this second petition is, the advancement and progress of the gospel; obedience to the faith or doctrine of Christ, and his appearance in glory.

glory. See 2 Tim. iv. 8. Rom. viii. 19, &c. Rev. xxii. 17, 21. It may be paraphrased thus, "May thy kingdom of grace come quickly, and swallow up all the kingdoms of the earth; may all mankind, receiving thee, O Christ, for their king, and truly believing in thy name, be filled with righteousness and peace and joy; with holiness and happiness, till they are removed hence, into thy kingdom of glory, there to reign with thee for ever and ever.

Thy will be done on earth, &c.] III. That in consequence of the coming of this kingdom, on the establishment of this gospel in the world, men may be enabled to imitate the angels, by giving such a sincere, universal, and constant obedience to the divine commands, as the imperfection of human nature will admit of. This is the most humble, as well as the most prudent wish, that it is possible for the creature to express; because it implies that the Supreme Being will do nothing but what is for the interest of his creatures, and that he knows better than they what is so. See the Spectator, No. 207. Dr. Heylin joins the two petitions of this verse together; because, says he, they have a mutual dependance, and may best serve to explain each other. The latter, wherein we pray that we may do the will of God *on earth, as the angels do it in heaven*, might seem a strange, perhaps, or presumptuous, certainly an impossible request, had we not been first to say, *Thy kingdom come*. If the *kingdom of God comes*; i. e. if God vouchsafes to govern us, he will subdue all our enemies under our feet; *A sceptre of justice is the sceptre of his kingdom*. It will bring every thought into subjection; it will animate and govern our souls, as our souls do our bodies, and make us do his will on earth, as the angels do it in heaven.

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Ver. 11. Give us this day our daily bread] *Our bread convenient.* Wat. 4. The word ἐπιούσιον, rendered *daily*, in our version, is no where else to be found; neither in the LXX, or in any Greek author, or in any other place in the New Testament, but in this part of the Lord's prayer. Commentators differ much in their interpretation of it. That in *Etymol. Magna*, seems as just as any. Ἐπιούσιος, — Ὁ ἐπὶ τῇ οὐσίᾳ ἡμῶν ἀρμοζῶν. "That which is *sufficient* to our life;" and so Theophylact explains it. "What will strengthen us from day to day, for serving God with chearfulness and vigor." *Bread*, according to the Hebrew idiom signifies the whole provisions of the table. See Gen. xviii. 5. and in the present petition it signifies *raiment* also, with convenient *habitation*, and every thing necessary to life. See Agur's petition, Prov. xxx. 8. Since then we are not allowed to ask provision for rioting and luxury, but only for the necessaries of life, and that not for many years, but from day to day, the petition forbids anxious cares about futurity, and teaches us how moderate our desires of worldly things should be; and whereas not the poor only, (whose industry, all acknowledge, must be favoured by the concurrence of Providence, to render it successful) but the rich also are enjoined to pray for their bread day by day. This is an account of the great instability of human affairs, which renders the possession of wealth absolutely precarious; and because, without the divine blessing, even the abundance of the rich is not of itself sufficient to keep them alive, far less to make them happy. This petition contains a most excellent lesson, says Doddridge, to teach us, on the one hand, moderation in our desires; and on the other an humble dependence on Divine Providence for

for the most necessary supplies, be our possessions or our abilities ever so great. The petition therefore may be paraphrased, "*Give us, O Father, for we claim nothing of right, but only of thy free mercy;—This day; for we take no solicitous thought for the morrow,—Our daily bread; all things needful for our souls and bodies; not only the meat that perisheth, but the sacramental bread, and the grace; the food which endureth to everlasting life.*"

Ver. 12. And forgive us our debts, &c.] The condition on which we are to ask the forgiveness of our sins, is remarkable: *Forgive us,—as we forgive*: we must forgive others in order to our being forgiven ourselves, and are allowed to crave from God, only such forgiveness as we grant to others. So that, if we do not pardon our enemies, we in this fifth petition seriously and solemnly beg of God, to damn us eternally: for which reason, before men enter into the presence of Almighty God to worship, they ought to be well assured that their hearts are thoroughly purged from all rancour and malice. We may just observe, that in this petition there is no express mention made of repentance as necessary on the part of our enemies to entitle them to forgiveness; yet the nature of the petition itself and the parable of the two debtors, c. xviii. v. 23. which may be considered as a commentary upon it, seem to intimate that repentance is necessary: for since we pray *forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors*, making acknowledgment of our sins, and then asking forgiveness; and since God forgives none but such as repent, the meaning of the petition certainly is, "forgive us, who now confess our sins, and resolve to amend, even as we forgive those who repent of the injuries they

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have done us." In the mean time, when we beg forgiveness of God, like that which we grant to men, we must beware of setting our forgiveness on an equality with God's: The most perfect forgiveness which men are capable of exercising towards men who repent, falls infinitely short of the divine forgiveness necessary to repenting sinners; as is plain from this, that in the best, the flesh resists the spirit. Besides God himself has taken notice of the difference, Hosea, c. xi. v. 8, 9. *Because I am God and not man, &c.* We only beg that the divine forgiveness may resemble ours in its reality: In this petition therefore we are taught the necessity of forgiving really and from the heart all who repent of the evil they have done us. In other passages however, the doctrine of forgiveness is carried still higher. See the notes on chap. v. 44. Macknight, and Olearius.

Ver. 13. *And lead us not into temptation.] And do not bring us into temptation, but rescue us from the evil one.* Doddridge. This might be translated, "*And lead us not into temptation, but so as to deliver us from the evil;* either by removing the temptation itself, when it proves too hard for us, or by increasing our strength to resist it, as God shall see most for his glory." The correction for the translation here proposed is built upon this argument, that to pray for an absolute freedom from all solicitation or temptation to sin, is to seek a deliverance from the common lot of humanity, which is absurd; because trials and temptations are wisely appointed by God for the exercise and improvement of virtue in good men, and that others may be encouraged by the constancy and patience which they shew in affliction. Hence, instead of praying to be absolutely delivered from them, we are taught

taught to rejoice, when, by divine appointment, *we fall into temptations and trials*. This petition teaches us to preserve a sense of our own ability to repel and overcome the solicitations of the world, and of the necessity of assistance from above, both to regulate our passions and to conquer the difficulties of a religious life. See Macknight. The petition, however, may be well understood agreeably to the common version of it;—*Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us*; for, as God is the only potentate, the sole governor of the world, so that nothing can possibly fall out but by his allowance and permission, it is usual upon that account, in the stile of scripture, to impute all things to him, as the first cause, and as such the author of them. Thus he is said to have *sent Joseph into Egypt to preserve his life*,—though in fact *his brethren*, out of envy, *had sold him thither*. See Gen. xlv. 58. Job. i. 21. And it is in this sense that God is said to *lead unto temptation, or expose to temptation*; because all temptations come by his allowance; for the tempter and the tempted are his; all the powers of nature are his; and what we call chance or fortune, is nothing else but the incessant administration of his providence. The general intent, therefore, of these words, *lead us not, &c.* is, that with just distrust of ourselves, and an humble sense of our weakness, we should deprecate such trials as may endanger our feeble virtue. But as some trials, that is, temptations, are necessary and inevitable, it is therefore added, *but deliver us from evil*.

For thine is the Kingdom, &c.] III. These words contain the *doxology* or conclusion of the Lord's prayer; the genuineness whereof hath been very much disputed. It is, however, certainly very ancient. The Jews used it in their liturgies; and

they derived that use most probably from 1 Chron. xxix. 11. Bp. Hopkins, Mr. Blair, and other excellent writers have well observed, that it admirably suits and enforces every petition; and having therefore been so long received, and so generally used, it seems to be very properly retained in our bible: Accordingly I proceed to explain it, referring such as choose to enter into the dispute concerning its genuineness, to Dr. Mill, and Wetstein upon the place, Jones's History of the Canon, vol. 1. p. 141. and the other critics. It may be paraphrased thus: "Because the *government of the universe* is thine for ever, and thou alone possessest the power of creating and upholding all things; and because the glory of infinite perfections remains eternally with thee; therefore all men ought to *hallow thy name*, submit themselves to thy government, and perform thy will: In an humble sense of their dependance, should they seek from thee the supply of their wants, the pardon of their sins, and the kind protection of thy providence."

Ver. 14, 15. For if ye forgive, &c.] From what our Lord here says, we are not to imagine that the forgiving of injuries alone will entitle us to pardon. Indeed all negative declarations concerning the terms of salvation being in their own nature absolute, he who does not forgive, never shall be forgiven, as it is in the 15th verse. But affirmative declarations always apply this limitation, that no other condition of salvation be wanting. Behold then the necessity of forgiving all kinds of injuries, established by Jesus Christ himself! in opposition to the foolish opinions of the men of this world! who, associating the idea of cowardice with the greatest and most generous act of the human mind, the forgiveness of injuries, have laboured to
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render it shameful and vile, to the utter disgrace of human reason, and common sense. It is a strong remark of Archbp. Wake, upon that petition of the Lord's prayer, whereof these verses are explanatory, that "If we do not forgive as we hope to be forgiven, we imprecate the wrath of God upon our own heads, when we use the Lord's prayer, and do in reality pray after this desperate manner,—
 "Thou, O God, hast commanded me to forgive my brother his trespasses; thou hast declared that unless I do so, thou wilt not forgive me my sins. Well, let what will come, I am resolved to stand to the hazard of it. I will not forgive, nor be reconciled to my brother; do then with me as thou shalt see fit." Can the man of unforgiving temper, see his sin and his danger in a stronger point of view?

Ver. 16. Moreover, when ye fast, &c.] Our Lord goes on to apply the general advice, before given, to private fasting as well as to private prayer. The word *συνθῆπτος*, properly denotes a *fretful and angry countenance*, but here it signifies a "face disfigured with mortification and fasting." The LXX have used the same word, Gen. xl. 7. to express a *sad countenance*. See also Prov. xv. 13. This word, as well as *ὑποκρίται*, *hypocrites*, refers to the theatre, and to those actors and dissemblers there, who put on every countenance to serve their purpose. The word *ἀφανίζουσι*, or *vanish; to destroy*; and is the same word which has been rendered in the 19th and 20th verses *corrupt*. These hypocritical actors wonderfully affected the fame of extraordinary holiness. Hence they assumed very austere countenances in their fasts; they put on the appearance and dress of mourners, and induced a kind of paleness, at least as much as they could, over their countenance. In

short, *they made* their natural face to *disappear* as much as possible; putting on an artificial one, as the players put on their masks. See Fortuita Sacra. p. 14. Our Saviour refers here more particularly to the private and voluntary fastings of the Pharisees: they fasted on Mondays and Thursdays; but those who would be thought more devout than the rest, fasted besides on Tuesdays and Fridays, and abstained from all kind of food till sun-setting. There can be no doubt that our Saviour speaks here of private fasting only; because when public sins and calamities are to be *mourned* for, it ought to be performed in the most public manner. Doddridge renders this, *When you keep a fast, be not like the hypocrites, putting on a dismal air; for they deform their countenances, that, &c.*

Ver. 19—21. *Lay not up, &c.*] Lay not up for yourselves, &c. I should rather read, *Make not for yourselves, &c.* which the original imports, and the sense requires; because, whatever we place our happiness in, that we make our treasure; the treasure of the covetous is literal *treasure*; and that of the rest of the world consists of those things which they desire and count upon as a fund for enjoyment; for as *where our treasure is, there will our heart be also*; so where our heart is, there also is our treasure. As almost every animal has had its idolaters, so almost every kind of object has become a treasure to some or other of the sons of men. But as true religion is but one, so there is but one real treasure; one only that is worthy our option, and will answer our expectation, and *that* which we make for ourselves in heaven, when by the assiduous practice of virtue, we secure our everlasting interests there, as our Lord advises. Doddridge renders and paraphrases the 19th verse, (understanding
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it singly as a caution against covetousness) “ *Do not make it your great care to lay up for yourselves treasures here on earth, where so many accidents may deprive you of them; where the moth, for instance, may spoil your finest garments, and the devouring canker may consume your corn, or may corrupt the very metals you have hoarded; and where thieves may dig through the strongest walls which you have raised about them; and may steal them away; but, &c.*” Nothing certainly can be conceived more powerful to damp that keenness with which men pursue the things of this life, than the consideration of their emptiness, fragility, and uncertainty; or to kindle in them an ambition of obtaining the treasures of heaven, than the consideration of their being substantial, satisfying, durable, and subject to no accident whatever. See Heylin, Macknight, and Calmet.

Ver. 22, 23. The light of the body is the eye—single—evil.] The eye is the lamp of the body: clear or pure;—bad or vitiated. Heylin and Wat. *The eye is the lamp of the body: Body* here signifies, as it sometimes does in our own language, the *person*, the man himself; and *eye*, in the Hebrew idiom, signifies, as we observed on ch. v. 29. the intention, which casts a light upon whatever it aims at. Now when this intention is right, our Lord calls it the *single* or *simple eye*, ἀπλοῦς, and with good reason; for as—only one straight line can pass between two given points, and as the truth upon every stated question is but one, while error and mistake are almost infinitely various; so there is not, there cannot be, but one such intention. What that is, our Lord had just before declared, when he directed us to *make for ourselves treasures in heaven*; and that we might be induced to collect and unite all

all our desires in that one thing necessary. He here calls the intention to do so *the single eye*; on the contrary every, every other intention *an evil eye*; for every other deliberate *purpose*, which doth not coincide with, or become subordinate to the right intention, though we could suppose it innocent in itself, yet will prove an obstacle to that right intention, because the right intention cannot succeed but by a perfect renunciation of all other projects and designs; and therefore our Lord immediately subjoins, *no man can serve two masters*. See Heylen and Calmet.

Ver. 24. No man can serve, &c.—mammon.] *Mammon* is a Syriac word for *riches*, which our Lord beautifully represents as a person whom the folly of men had deified. And because men put their trust generally in external advantages, such as riches, authority, honour, power, &c. the word *mammon* is used to denote every thing of that kind, and particularly *riches*, by way of eminence. The word *hate* in this verse signifies *not to mind*, *to have a less value for*; and to *love* is to have a greater regard for; as appears from the remaining part of the verse, and from ch. x. 37. compared with Luke xii. 16. See Bp. Newton's Notes on Par. Lost. b. i. ver. 678.

Ver. 25. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought, &c.] *Be not solicitous*, [and so wherever it occurs]—*Is not the life more than food*, Wat. The Greek *μεριμνᾶτε* imports such anxiety, as causes an intestine strife, by contrary reasonings with opposite hopes and fears. This is so strictly the sense of the original, that a word of the same derivation is used by our Lord, where he says, *a kingdom divided against itself μετῴδωα—cannot stand*. ch. xii. 25. So that this precept only forbids that perplexity and
distraction

distraction of thought, which is inconsistent with the *single right intention*, and interrupts our resignation to the divine will. St. Luke, in the parallel place, has made use of the word *μεταβολή*, ch. xii. 29. which signifies to have a wavering and doubtful mind, disquieted and tossed about with mistrust and fear. See Mintert on the word. And it is easy to observe, that the arguments urged by our Lord contain nothing peculiar to their case; but are built on considerations applicable to all Christians. Compare Philip iv. 6. and 1 Pet. v. 7. as also Luke xxii. 35, 36. and Acts xx. 34. from whence it appears, that the Apostles themselves were not entirely to neglect a prudent care for their own subsistence, in dependance on miraculous provisions. Our Saviour, attentive to his main argument, proceeds in these verses to shew, that all the reasons by which worldly-mindedness is usually justified or palliated are entirely overthrown, by considering the power, perfection, and extent of the PROVIDENCE of God. To say absolutely *take no thought*, is a misrepresentation of our Lord's doctrine: all his intention here was, to teach the virtues in the most radical manner, by extirpating the remotest tendency to the contrary vices. As under the 6th commandment, which prohibits *murder*, he forbids an *angry word*, or *malicious thought*; so here, to preserve us from *worldly-mindedness*, he forbids all painfully-solicitous care even for the necessities of life; and he enforces his prohibition with such cogent arguments, as must convince all who piously attend to them. *Is not the life more than food*, and the body than cloathing? "He who hath given us the greater, will he deny us the less? He who gave us our being, will he refuse what is necessary for the support of it?—It is as absurd as ungrateful to distrust

distrust a benefactor, whose goodness we have already so largely experienced, and who takes upon himself the care to provide for us. *Consider the birds of the air; they sow not, &c.—are ye not of greater value than they?* Are ye not the children of God?—And when ye see him make so plentiful a provision for his inferior creatures, can you suspect that he will leave you, his children, destitute of necessary subsistence? See more on ver. 34. and the note on Ps. xciv. 19.

Ver. 27. Which of you, by taking thought, &c.] *Who of you, by his solicitude, can prolong his life an hour?* A version strictly literal would be, *can add any length to his age*; for *ηλικία* signifies both *age* and *stature*, and is to be rendered by either, as the occasion requires. Our translators have rendered it by *age*, John ix. 21, 23. end Heb. xi. 11.

Ver. 32. (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek)] It was the general character of the heathens, that they neither prayed to their Gods, nor laboured themselves for any other blessings than the temporal ones here mentioned; as all their prayers and hymns to their deities abundantly prove, and as we learn in particular from the 10th satire of Juvenal: and this because they were in a great measure ignorant of God's providence and goodness, had erred fundamentally in their notions of religion, and had uncertain hope of a future state. See Ephes. ii. 2. We may observe that there is a noble antithesis in this verse. Christ sets God's knowledge of our wants in opposition to the anxiety of the heathens about having them supplied, to intimate that the one is much more effectual for that purpose than the other. See 1 Kings xviii. 27. Macknight and Wetstein.

Ver. 33. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, &c.]

&c.] That is, true religion; the *advantages* of the kingdom of God: Rom. xiv. 17. the treasures mentioned ver. 20. Comp. 1 Kings iii. 11, 12. *And his righteousness*, i. e. particularly, the performance of God's commandments, as they have been illustrated and explained by Jesus Christ, and not as they were understood by the Pharisees. See ch. v. 6, 20, 48. Dr. Clarke, in his sermons, paraphrases the passage thus: "Be not so solicitous for the things of this present life, as to neglect your more important interest in that which is to come; but let your principle care be to secure this." The meaning of the word *προσθησεται* is, *shall be added over and above*; than which expression nothing could have been more proper; for these temporal blessings are by no means essential to the stipulations of the covenant of grace, but are intirely to be referred to the divine good pleasure, to add or with-hold, as God shall see fit. The goods of this world ought not to be looked upon by Christians as true and essential advantages. They should make a good use of them, if God thinks proper to bless them therewith. 1 Tim. iv. 8. but if not, their duty is to be satisfied with their own portion, whatever it is, being possessed of spiritual goods, and hoping for those that are eternal. Heb. xi. 10, 13, 16, 17.

Ver. 34. Take therefore no thought, &c.] "Since the extent and efficacy of Divine Providence is so great, and since you are the objects of its peculiar care, you need not vex yourselves about futurity;" *for the morrow* denotes future time in general. *The morrow* continues our Lord, *shall take thought for the things of itself*; or rather, according to the Hebrew idiom, *shalt make you take thought for the things of itself*; namely, in a proper time, it being sufficient that you provide the necessities of life for yourselves

yourself as they are wanted: "*Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof*"; every time has abundant necessary troubles of its own; so that it is foolish to increase them by anticipating those which are to come, especially as by that anticipation it is not in your power to prevent any future evils."

A fear of wanting necessities is the most specious pretence for *covetousness*; and it is in order to repress the remotest tendencies to that base disposition, that our Lord is thus copious and emphatical in assuring us of the superintending care of Providence. But let no perverse spirit mistake his declarations here as a dispensation from industry: He never meant to abrogate that sentence passed upon our whole race, *in the sweat of thy face thou shalt eat bread*. Daily labour is a principal part of the penance imposed on mankind, and is included in the *daily cross* which he has commanded us to take up. It is only by taking up that cross, and punctually discharging our duty in that state of life to which God hath called us, that we have a claim to his fatherly protection. Virtue consists not merely in *action* but also in *motive* which animates it. Our course of action is taught elsewhere; and our wordly calling, which is to us the order of Providence, prescribes the daily work we have to do. The doctrine now under consideration relates to the proper *motive* of our actions, directing our view towards the great end of which they all ought to be ultimately referred. Our *actions* are upon earth; but the right motive is in heaven, where only faith can penetrate; and our Lord expostulating with his disciples upon their want of sensibility to that *motive*, subjoins, at ver. 30. *O ye of little faith*. See Macknight and Heylin.

CHAP. VII.

Ver. 1, 2. *Judge not, &c.*] Our Saviour having condemned worldly-mindedness in the general, proceeds to forbid all rash and unfavourable judgments, whether of the characters of others in general or of their actions in particular. See Luke vi. 37. Though he does not level his discourse against the Pharisees in this chapter, as in the two foregoing, he seems evidently to glance upon them in this and other expressions which he uses in it. That they were very culpable on this head, appears from Luke xviii. 9, 14. xvi. 14, 15. and John vii. 47, 49. comp. Isai. lxxv. 5. Indeed their unjust censures of Christ are the strongest instances of it that can be conceived. God proposes and recommends his mercy to our imitation: He commands us in this, in *mercy*, to be *perfect as himself*; but *judgment* is His reserved prerogative, and they shall feel the weight of it who rashly invade its office. To *judge* is an act of sovereignty; it is an exercise of such authority as is indeed very considerable, if we were really possessed of it. Pride, among its other usurpations arrogates to itself this province; it raises us above our brethren in an imaginary tribunal, from whence we affect to distribute praise or blame in the sentence we pass on them, and which is commonly to their disadvantage, because the first-born of *pride* is malice: He who loves himself more than he ought, must love others less than he ought; and the same principle which makes us over-value ourselves, makes us under-value our neighbours; and this is the reason why we err so much oftener to the prejudice, than to the disadvantage of our neighbour. Mere ignorance has an equal chance either way: What is thrown in the

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dark,

dark, and at random, might as probably hit above as below the mark; the reason why we are so often under it, is the malice of our hearts, which makes us delight to find faults in others, as excuses for our own faults, or foils to our own virtues. The expression *With what measure ye mete, &c.* is proverbial, and was much in use among the Jews. The words are certainly most awful. Thus may we chuse, as it were, for ourselves, whether God shall be severe or merciful to us. God and man will favour the candid and benevolent: but they must expect judgment without mercy, who shew no mercy: See Heylin, Chemnitz, and L'Enfant.

Ver. 3. And why beholdest thou.] *τί βλέπεις*,—“Why dost thou *observe*, or *take notice of*? For *βλέπεις* here signifies not only to be acquainted with other people's faults, but to *pry into them*, with a design to censure and reprove them. *Eye* here, as in ch. v. 29. and vi. 22. signifies the *intention*, which is the usual subject of rash censures; because *actions* are self-evident, and not so liable to misconstruction, as the *intention* wherewith they are performed.—This latter is not apparent, and therefore leaves room for that rash judgement which our Lord just before prohibited. The word which we render *mote*, signifies a *splinter* or *shiver* of wood; in Latin *festuca*, whence the English *fescu*. This, and the *beam* as its opposite, were proverbially used by the Jews, to denote small infirmities and gross faults; each of which proportionably obstruct the moral discernment. See Stockuis on the word *δοκός*, Heylin, and Horace, sat. iii. lib. i. ver. 26.

Ver. 4. Let me pull out the mote, &c.] *Hold still and I will take the mote out of thine eye.* This seems to be the exact meaning of *Ἄφες ἐβάλω*, which translated thus literally, elegantly intimates how ready men are to shrink from reproof. The simile here used

used implies, that it is as absurd for a bad man to set up for a reprove of others, as it would be for one who is almost blind himself, to pretend to perform operations on other men's eyes. *How wilt thou say*, means, "How wilt thou have the confidence to say."—See Doddridge and L'Enfante.

Ver. 5. Thou hypocrite!] As by the eye we judge of things relating to the body, so by the understanding we judge of things pertaining to the soul. You may therefore lay this down as fixed and certain, that the more exalted your own virtue is, the better will you be able to judge of your brother's faults; and the better qualified, both in point of skill and authority, to reclaim him. Your judgment of his character and actions will be so much the more charitable, and for that reason so much the more just. Your rebuke will be so much the more mild, prudent, and winning, and your authority to press a reformation upon him so much the more weighty. It is hypocrisy to pretend a zeal for others, if we have not first had it for ourselves. True zeal is uniform, and even begins within to remove the beam from our own eye; which is its proper and peculiar work, and a necessary qualification for reforming others. Yet, even when it is so qualified, it must still proceed with a prudent caution, as our Lord instructs us in the next verse.

Ver. 6. Give not that which is holy, &c.] *Left these trample—and these turn again and tear you.*

Wat. "Do not reprove persons of a snarling, profligate, and sensual disposition; because the effect which vice hath upon such is generally bad; they will be provoked by it to do you a mischief, or at least will despise both you and your admonition. Persons of this kind will not be instructed,

far less will they receive a direct rebuke. You may warn others against them, you may weep over them, and you may pray for them; but you cannot reprove them with success and safety; for which reason they are by all means to be avoided." There is a similar maxim to this in the Talmudical writings; "*Do not cast pearls before swine;*" to which is added, by way of explanation, "*Do not offer wisdom to one who knows not the price of it.*" This was one reason why our Saviour taught in parables. Comp. Acts xiii. 45, 46. and the parallel places.

Ver. 11. If you then, being evil.] *If ye then, wicked as you are.* Wat. The words *Τὸ ἐξ ὑμῶν, which of ye*, in the 9th verse, are well explained by this. "If, says our Lord, you, imperfect and evil as you are, and some of you, perhaps tenacious, froward, and unkind, readily give good gifts to your children when they cry for them, how much rather will the Great God, who is perfect in goodness, and unbounded in loving-kindness, bestow blessings on his children, who endeavour to resemble him in his perfections, and for that end ask the assistance of his Holy Spirit?"—for by *good things* are meant the true goods, Luke xi. 13. the gifts of the Holy Ghost; whatever in general is proper and necessary for them, and will prove to them a real good.

Ver. 12. Therefore, all things, &c.] Which Doddridge thus connects with the preceding verse: "Being animated therefore by his goodness, study to express your gratitude for it, by your integrity and kindness to your fellow-creatures and take it as a most sacred rule, *All things, &c.* Treat men in every instance just as you would think it reasonable to be treated by them, if you were in their
circumstances,

circumstances, and they in yours; for this is in effect the summary and abstract of all the human social virtues recommended in the moral precepts of the law and the prophets, and it was one of the greatest ends of both to bring men to this humane and equitable temper. I say one of the greatest, that this may be reconciled with our Lord's declaring the love of God to be the first and great commandment. chap. xxii. 38. And it is indeed a most absurd and fatal error to imagine, that the regulation of social life is the only end of religion." We may just observe, that this precept, which contains the rule of natural equity, justice, and even of charity, was even familiar to the Jews, and one of their maxims. See Tobit iv. 15. And a similar precept has been delivered by several heathen writers; many quotations from whom the reader will find by referring to Grotius and Wetstein on the place. Thus far proceeds the doctrinal part of the sermon; the exhortation to practice it begins at the next verse. See Bengelius. The reader will find, in the excellent discourses of bishop Atterbury and Dr. Evans, the sense, reasonableness and use of this golden law illustrated in a manner which deserves the most attentive perusal.

Ver. 13. Enter ye in at the straight gate.] This is, *strive to enter.* See Luke xiii. 24. The *straight gate*, says Dr. Heylin, is the law just before mentioned; namely, that we should do as we would be done by. A manuscript before me reads, ver. 13. *for the wide gate, and the broad way, is that which leadeth, &c. but the strait gate, and the narrow way, is that which, &c.* By these figurative expressions our blessed Saviour give us to understand how easy it is to enter into destruction, and how hard to procure our own salvation. Intimat-

ing at the same time, that the generality of mankind tread in the wide paths of error, and follow their passions, while very few know how to find out truth, and to adhere thereto, in opposition to all the obstacles and discouragements they meet with in their way. Compare. Prov. xiv. 12, 13. vii. 27. Ecclef. xxi. 11. The reflections of Erasmus upon the *strait gate* are lively. "How strait, says he, is the *gate* how narrow the *way*, nothing is to be found that flatters the flesh, but many things opposite; poverty, fasting, watching, injuries, chastity, sobriety. And as for the gate it receives none that are swollen with the glory of this life; none that are elated and lengthened out with pride; none that are distended with luxury. It does not admit those who are laden with the fardels of riches, nor those that drag along with them the other implements of the world. None can pass through it but naked men, who are stripped of all worldly lusts, and who, having put off their bodies, are as it were emancipated into spirits; which is the reason that it is sought after by so very few." In order to reconcile what is here advanced with those passages which assert Christ's yoke to be easy, and the *ways of wisdom* to be *ways of pleasantness*, &c. some think it necessary to suppose, that this text refers entirely to the case of persecution; and that the strait gate is a violent death, which lay at the end of the narrow way, and concluded the injuries and calamities which persecutors would bring upon Christians. See Hallet's discourses, vol. iii. p. 24, &c. But nothing is more certain than that Christ requires from all his disciples, in all ages and places, a life of mortification and self-denial; which, though it is mingled with and introductory to pleasures abundantly sufficient

ficient to counterbalance it, yet to corrupt nature is difficult. See Doddridge; and Whitby, Grotius and Wettstein, for many passages from the heathen writers.

Ver. 16—20. Ye shall know them by their fruits.] That is by the evil tendency of their doctrines, as well as by the immorality of their lives. See John iv. i. 1 Cor. xiii. 3. Comp. chap. iii. 8. xxi. 43. John xv. 2. 5. Col. i. 6. and see 2 Tim. iii. 5—9. It will be objected, that bad men may teach good doctrines, and the worst have been known to do it in some instances. But to this I answer, that our Lord does not exhort his disciples to reject whatever such men taught; but only to be upon their guard against them, that they might not credit any thing merely on their authority.

Ver. 21. Not every one that saith, &c.] That is, “Among those who acknowledged me for the Messiah, none but such as *do* the will of God shall be admitted into his kingdom: not a bare possession of religion, but a conscientious performance of the duties of it, will procure us the eternal approbation of God.”

Ver. 22. In that day.] Prophecy and preaching, ejecting of devils, and other miracles are mentioned, to show that no gift, endowment, or accomplishment whatsoever, without faith and holiness, will avail to our acceptance with God. A caution very proper at all times, but more especially in those days, when the gifts of the Spirit were to be bestowed in such plenty on them who made profession of Christianity. See Mac-knight and Calmet.

Ver. 23. I will profess unto them.] The author of an imperfect homily, instead of ὁμολογήσω, reads

reads *ὀμνῶν*, *I will swear*, which sense well suits this place. Maldonat. To *know*, frequently signifies in scripture to *acknowledge or approve*.

Ver. 28. Astonished at his doctrine.] Or, his manner of teaching: See Mark i. 27. for he taught them, (ver. 29.) as one having authority. This authority plainly appeared in these words, *but I say unto you*, &c. from which it is evident that Jesus Christ was not a teacher only of God's will, but a law-giver, and a person sent immediately from God: and invested with a much greater authority than any of the prophets that went before him:—And not as the Scribes: the Vulgate and Syriac versions add, and the Pharisees,—whose lectures, for the most part, were absolutely trifling, being drawn from tradition, or from the comments of other doctors, which these ignorant and corrupt teachers substituted in the place of scripture, reason and truth. The reflection wherewith the Evangelist concludes his account of this sermon, seems evidently to prove that the whole was delivered at once. *It came to pass when Jesus had finished these sayings*, &c. *i. e.* had ended this discourse to the people, &c. See Chemnitz and Hammond. Those who choose to dwell more largely upon this discourse will be amply satisfied by reading the excellent sermons of bishop Blackall, and Mr. Blair, upon it.

CHAP VIII.

Ver. 2. And behold, there came a leper.] It has been generally thought, that this is the leper whose cure is recorded, Mark i. 40. Luke v. 12. and consequently that the sermon in Luke is not the same with that in the preceding chapter.
“ But

“ But the cures, says Macknight, are different: that was performed in a *city*, this in the fields. Having cleansed the leper here mentioned, *Jesus entered into Capernaum*, and cured the centurion’s servant; whereas the other leper, having published the miracle, Jesus could not, at least in the day-time, go into the town; but was obliged to remain without, in desert places, to shun the crowd.”

The *immediate cure* of the leprosy was only in the power of God: the leper, therefore, by this application to Christ, immediately confesses his divine authority; but more fully to enter into this subject, the reader should refer to our notes on Levit. xiii. and on 2 Kings v. 7.

Ver. 4. See thou tell no man.] Jesus commanded the lepers without delay to haste to Jerusalem, lest, if the report of his cure should arrive before him, the priests, through envy, might refuse to pronounce him cleansed; for it was the province of the priests to judge of and to determine concerning the leprosy. *For a testimony unto them*, means to the *Jews*, and particularly to the priests and Pharisees who withstood the doctrine of Christ. The sense of the passage is, “ that the sacrifice offered by the leper may be a proof of the reality of this miracle, and consequently of my divine mission.” These words may also be rendered, *that it may be a testimony against them*. Comp. Mark vi. 11. Luke ix. 5. The plain meaning seems to be, “ Go without delay and shew yourself, cleansed as you are, to the priest, and present the sacrifices which the law requires for your purification, that we may convince them of the reality of the cure, and yet not give them any occasion of calumny.” But though our Saviour here might enjoin secrecy on the leper only till he had shewn himself to the priest; yet he commanded

commanded many others to tell none of the miracles he had wrought upon them. Perhaps our Saviour did not intend that he should be universally received as the Messiah during his own life-time. He was indeed to fulfil all the prophetic characters of the Messiah, that when the time appointed for erecting his kingdom came, the foundation on which it was to rest might want nothing of the strength and solidity which was necessary to support so great a fabric, as the faith of the world. But all those prophetic characters of the Messiah Jesus fulfilled, and appropriated to himself, when in his own life-time, he proved his mission from God; by miracles communicated the knowledge of divine things to a competent number of disciples, in order to their propagating it through the world; and in the conclusion, by his sufferings and death not only confirmed his doctrine, but made atonement for the sins of men. The wisdom of his plan was worthy of its author; for had our Lord, during his ministry, proposed to convert great numbers of the Jews, he might, no doubt, have done it with as much success as after his ascension; but then the consequences would have been inconvenient in two respects; I. Had the Jews universally become Christ's followers, they would have endeavoured to make him a king; by which means one main end of his coming must have been defeated,—his dying as an atonement for sin; and the Christian religion have been deprived of the evidence which it derives from the greatest of all miracles, his resurrection from the dead. II. This general good reception given to Jesus by his countrymen, might have made the Gentiles reject him, supposing it was a contrivance to support the sinking credit of the nation.—On the other hand, if it shall be said that our Lord could

could not have convinced more than he did, though he had attempted it. This consequence at least must have followed from the attempt; Herod in Galilee, or the governor of Judea, provoked at him for affecting popularity, would have cut him off: or though *they* despised him, and let him alone, the haughty priests would certainly have destroyed him before his time. We are warranted to say this by what happened towards the conclusion of his ministry: When he went into Jerusalem, taught in the temple, and wrought his miracles publicly before the world, they pursued him so hotly, that though he was innocent of every crime, they constrained the governor to condemn him, and execute upon him the punishment of the vilest malefactor. But as it was necessary that Jesus should perform many miracles for the confirmation of his mission, and preach many sermons, in order to prepare his disciples for their future work, He was obliged, at least in the beginning of his ministry, to keep himself as private as the nature of his work would admit; and this I suppose was one of the reasons that induced him to spend so large a share of his public life in Galilee, and the other countries about the lake of Gennesareth. But farther, our Lord kept himself private, that he might not be too much incommoded by the crowds; for though he used every prudent method to prevent it he was often hurried to such a degree, that he had not leisure to take his necessary meals, far less leisure to instruct his disciples. Mark i. 45. iii. 20. vi. 31. To conclude, besides these good reasons, there may oft-times have been particular circumstances, which made it fit to conceal the miracle, on the occasion of which the caution was given. We know there was a reason of this kind attending the miracle under consideration,

tion, which we have already observed at the beginning of this note. See Macknight, Clarke, and Wettstein. As I have already considered the *miracles* and *parables* of our Saviour in large *discourses*, and have not only explained them, but deduced the most important practical doctrines from them, I shall be the more brief with respect to them here, referring my readers to what I have said in the *discourses*.

Ver. 5. And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum.] St. Luke has related this story more at large than St. Matthew. The whole may be thus connected: Jesus, having finished his sermon on the mount, as soon as he came down from thence, to shew that his words and doctrines pertained both to the Jews and Gentiles, performed two miracles: the one for a Jew, a leper who came to him, the other for a Gentile, a centurion or Roman commander of 100 soldiers, who was stationed at Capernaum. A servant of this centurion, whose virtue and honesty, obedience and industry made him very valuable [*ἐντιμος*] in the eyes of his master, lay at home sick of the palsy, in the most grievous stage of the disease; *δυνως βαρυνόμενος*. The centurion hearing of Jesus (whose fame began now to spread abroad, and to which his miraculous cure performed at a distance on the son of a nobleman in this same city must have greatly contributed; See John iv. 43—53.) *but not thinking himself worthy to come unto him*, engaged, as St. Luke informs us, the elders of the Jews in his cause, and sent them to intercede with this blessed person, of whom he had conceived such high notions, on behalf of his afflicted servant. They performed their offices punctually; for they came and besought our Lord instantly and earnestly, and strengthened their im-
portunity

portunity by informing him, that the centurion was worthy for whom he should do this ;—for *he loveth our nation*, say they, and as a proof of it, *hath built us a synagogue*. Jesus ever ready to do good, made them no reply, but immediately went with them. The centurion hearing that he was coming, moved by the most remarkable humanity, and judging his house unworthy the presence of so divine a guest, immediately dismissed his friends, to desire the master not to give himself so great trouble, as to come to the house of one, who judged himself so far from being worthy of this great condescension, that he thought himself not even worthy to come to Jesus : His humble request was, that he would deign to *speak the word only*, since he was assured that would be sufficient for the recovery of his servant. But humanity never yet prevented Christ's approach, and therefore he proceeded on towards the centurion's house ; coming near to which, the centurion himself, as St. Matthew here informs us, hastened out to meet him ; and thus the sacred historians are easily reconciled, and the story recorded here, and in St. Luke, appears to be one and the same. See my sermon on the good centurion, vol. i. p. 97. However as Macknight and some others suppose the stories to be different, that I may do justice to the subject, I will subjoin their arguments at the end of the 13th verse.

Ver. 11, 12. And I say unto you.] From this exalted pitch of faith found in a heathen, Jesus took occasion to declare the merciful purpose which God entertained towards all the Gentiles ; namely, that he would accept their faith as readily as the faith of the Jews, and seat them with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in heaven, while the children of

the kingdom, i. e. such of the professing people of God as came short of their faith, should be shut out for ever. The Greek word κλαυθμος, signifies also the *cries* and *howlings* which sometimes accompany weeping; and the *gnasbing* of teeth which is added here, completes the description of rage and despair. See ch. xiii. 42, 50. Acts vii. 54. It has been justly observed by many commentators, that this phrase of *outer darkness*, which is often used after comparing the kingdom of heaven to a banquet, contains a beautiful allusion to the lustre of those illuminated rooms in which such feasts were generally celebrated, as opposed to that darkness which surrounded those who by night were turned out; but it also sometimes goes yet farther, when the persons excluded are supposed to be thrown into a dark dungeon. Comp. ch. xxii. 13. xv. 30. and Jude, ver. 13. and see Doddridge, Macknight, and Calmet.

Ver. 13. Jesus said to the centurion, Go thy way.] This most evidently proves that the centurion was come out of his house, as we have observed on ver. 5. There is in these words of our Saviour a strong insinuation, that the centurion had conceived no higher an idea of his divine power than was just. *As thou hast believed, so, &c.* After these words many manuscripts read, *And the centurion, returning to his house, found that his servant, &c.* See Wetstein. This miracle, says Macknight, is generally supposed to have been the same with that related Luke vii. 1. Yet they seem to have been different: for I. according to Matthew, it was the centurion's *son*, (παῖς) who was sick, whereas, according to Luke, it was his *slave* (δουλος). II. Matthew's centurion came in person, being to ask a favour for his

his *son*; whereas Luke's centurion, considering with himself that he was to petition Jesus in behalf of a *slave*, first prevailed with the elders of the town to present his petition: afterwards, on second thoughts, he deputed some intimate friends to hinder Jesus from coming. III. There is not the smallest hint given in Matthew that the centurion of whom he speaks was a proselyte. On the contrary, there is an insinuation that he was not, in the opposition that is stated between his faith, and the faith of the Israelites; and in the declaration which our Lord was pleased to make on this occasion; viz. that many should come from the east and west, i. e. from all countries, and sit down in the kingdom of God, while the children of the kingdom, who looked on themselves as having the only natural right to it, should be excluded for ever. Whereas the centurion St. Luke speaks of, was a lover of the Jewish nation, and had built them a synagogue, perhaps in Italy, or some other heathen country; and so was, in all probability, a *proselyte of righteousness*, for which cause the principal people of the town chearfully undertook to solicit Jesus in his behalf. To conclude, that two centurions should have had one, his son, and the other his slave, cured in Capernaum, with like circumstances, is no more improbable than that the temple should have been twice purged, the multitude twice fed, and the fishes twice caught by miracle, and with the same circumstances.

Ver. 15. And he touched her hand.] Her cure was affected in an instant, and not slowly, like the cures performed in the course of nature, or by medicine; for though the length and violence of her distemper had brought her into a weak and

languid state, her full strength returned all at once, insomuch that rising up immediately, she prepared a supper for them, and served them while at meat, *διηκόνει αὐτοῖς* : shewing that she was restored to perfect health. Dr. Waterland reads *αὐτῇ*, to him, after many manuscripts.

Ver. 17. That it might be fulfilled, &c.] This prophesy of Isaiah relates properly to the sins of men, whereof diseases are the emblem and the consequence ; for which reason the original Hebrew words rendered here our infirmities, have been by the LXX, and by St. Peter, 1 Ep. ch. ii. 24. translated *our sins*. Grotius has observed, that the word *ἐσθλασαι* signifies, “to carry a heavy load,” Rom. xv. 1. Gal. vi. 2. and so expresses well the indefatigable labours of Christ, spending the evening in healing, probably with many intermingled discourses, after he employed the day in preaching. Our Redeemer, by assuming the human nature, with its infirmities and diseases, as well as by his sufferings, made atonement for sins, and freed men both from the temporal and eternal punishment of sin. Of this he now gave the clearest proof in his miracles, healing with sovereign authority all diseases originally inflicted on men as the temporal punishment of sin : Hence the curing of these diseases is called by Christ himself, in the second verse of the next chapter, the *forgiving of sins*.

Ver. 18—20. Now when Jesus saw, &c.] Though our Saviour had retired into the wilderness after the cure of the leper mentioned Luke v. 12. the people, excited by the fame of that miracle, came to him from every quarter ; wherefore that he might effectually avoid them, he resolved to go to the other side of the lake, and commanded his disciples to accompany

accompany him. Upon this a Scribe, who happened to be present, offered to follow him, ver. 19. but Jesus, knowing that he had nothing in view but the pleasures and profits of the supposed kingdom, would not accept of his service; telling him, that he was quite mistaken, if he proposed to better his worldly circumstances by attending him. The Phrase *Son of man* is found in Dan. vii. 13. where the universal dominion to which the Messiah, in quality of the son of man, was to be raised, is described. It is the appellation which Jesus Christ commonly gives himself; and as he was called so by none but himself, it is plain he chose the title out of humility, as having some relation to his mean and humble appearance in this world.

Ver. 21, 22. And another—said, &c.] Let the dead bury their dead: “Let those who are themselves spiritually dead, perform the rites of funeral; Yea, let the dead remain unburied, rather than disobey my word, when I give thee so great a Commission.”

Ver. 27. The men marvelled, saying, &c.] This reflection, as well as the extreme fear of the disciples in the time of their danger, may seem unaccountable, considering how many and what miracles they had been witnesses to; but both may be explained in some measure by the following remark: that hitherto his miracles were generally upon diseased persons, and that he had given as yet no proofs of his dominion over the elements, the wind and the water, which, it seems, were thought less subject to human power than distempers; or if this does not account for the reflection which the disciples made on seeing the present instance of Christ's power, it may be attributed to the fear and confusion

fusion they were in, occasioned by the greatness of their jeopardy, from which they were but just delivered. See more concerning this miracle on Mark iv. 39.

Ver. 28. And when he was come to the other side.] When Jesus and his disciples landed at this place, *two men possessed with devils* came towards them from the tombs. Mark and Luke speak only of one demoniac; but in several instances the sacred historians mention but one person, though more were concerned in the matter related. St. Austin thinks that one of the demoniacs was more remarkable than the other, perhaps for his birth, or parts, or interest in the country; and that his cure made more noise, and for that reason was mentioned by Mark and Luke, while they omitted the cure of the other. St. Luke's account, as it stands in our translation, seems in one particular to clash with St. Mathew and St. Mark; for he says, chap. viii. 27. *there met him out of the city a certain man*; but there is no real inconsistency between the Evangelists; for St. Luke's words are *ἀνὴρ ἐκ τῆς πόλεως*, which properly signifies *a man of the city*, one who had formerly been an inhabitant, though now he dwelt among the tombs. See the Phrase in John i. 45. Accordingly St. Luke tells us, that he did not abide in any house, but in the tombs; whither Grotius supposes that the dæmons chose to drive the men whom they possessed, to confirm some superstitious notions of the Jews relating to the power of evil spirits over the dead. The heathens had undoubtedly such notions; but Elsner's opinion seems most probable, that the dæmoniacs chose the caves of this burying ground as a kind of shelter; and he has shewn, that wretches in extremity some-
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times did the like. It should be remembered that the sepulchres of the Jews were, very wisely, always at some distance from their cities, in lonely and desert places. Hence St. Luke says of the demoniac, ch. viii. 29. that *he was driven into the wilderness*. Doubtless these malevolent spirits love such tokens of death and destruction.

It should be observed further, that no compassion to these unhappy men, nor endeavours for their own security, had been wanting in the people of the place; for they had frequently endeavoured to confine them; but *no man could bind them, no not with chains*; because, though they had been frequently so bound, the chains had been plucked asunder by them. See Mark v. 4. Being therefore at liberty, they shunned the society of men, wandering day and night amidst the melancholy receptacles of the dead; formidable to all who passed by, and a great nuisance to the country. Concerning the nature of these demoniacs, see the note on the 33d verse.

Ver. 29. What have we to do with thee?] This is an Hebrew Phrase, signifying, "What right, rule, or authority dost thou claim over us? What concern hast thou with us?" See John ii. 4. Judg. xi. 12. 2 Sam. xvi. 10. 1 Kings xvii. 18. 2 Kings iii. 13. ix. 19. Septuagint. There is in the next words, *art thou come to torment us*, &c. such a reference to the final sentence which Christ is to pass upon these rebel spirits in the judgment of the great day, to which they are reserved, (Jude, ver. 6.) as could not have been dictated by lunacy; and it is much to be questioned whether the person speaking, or any of the hearers, but Christ himself understood

understood the sense and propriety of them. See 2 Peter ii. 4.

Ver. 30—32. And there was a good way off—many swine, &c.] Instead of *a good way off*, Doddridge reads *at a considerable distance—at some distance*;—and by comparing Mark v. 11. and Luke viii. 32. it will be found, that this is the true meaning of the word *μαργὰν*. St. Mark says, that there were about two thousand little *herd* of swine; which will not seem strange, if it be considered that the generality of the inhabitants of that country were Gentiles. The devils, no doubt, requested permission to enter into the herd of swine, with a view to prevent any good effects which the miracle might have had on the Gadarenes, and to render Christ odious to them. Their design could not be hid from Jesus; nevertheless he granted their request, making it subservient to his own gracious purposes. He permitted the devils to enter into the swine, not only to shew the reality of the *possession* (which was thus undeniably proved, for nothing but such a possession could have forced so large a herd down a precipice into the water); but that we might understand how great the power of evil spirits is, and how terrible the effects of their malice would be, if they were not restrained; for no sooner was the permission granted, than the keepers who were with the swine, and the disciples who were at a distance, beheld, to their great astonishment, the whole herd running furiously down the mountain, and leaping from the tops of the rocks into the sea; while the possessed furious madmen immediately became meek and composed, having recovered the entire exercise of their reason. Jesus also might permit the devils thus to fall
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on the herd, as a punishment to the Gadarenes for keeping swine, which were a snare to the Jews; and to make trial of their disposition, whether they would become more affected with the loss of their cattle, than with the recovery of the men, and with the doctrine of the kingdom. Whatever were the reasons, it is certain, that though he might rightfully have used all properties as he pleased; yet this, and the withering of the barren fig-tree are the only instances wherein man suffered the least damage by any thing our Lord ever did. We may observe further, that the devils, by making this request to Jesus, acknowledged that it was not in the power even of a *legion* of them to do any mischief to so contemptible a creature as a *swine*, without Christ's permission; far less could they destroy the man in whom they lodged. See Doddridge, Macknight, and bishop Pearce's vindication of the miracles of Jesus; and far more on this subject, "The *sermon* on the man possessed of a legion," vol. i. p. 322.

Ver. 33, 34. And they that kept them fled.] The miracle issuing thus in the destruction of the swine, was immediately reported in the town and country by the affrighted keepers, who, as they fled, had fallen in, it seems, with Jesus and his company, and learned from them the cause of what had happened. The intelligence threw the Gadarenes into the utmost consternation; for when they came, and saw the men who had been possessed sitting gravely in their mind, and decently cloathed, (the disciples having charitably supplied them with such garments as they could spare) they perceived how great Christ's power was, and were exceedingly afraid, having trespassed in the matter of the swine,
which

which was an unclean food; or, if the herd belonged to the Syrian inhabitants of the town, they might know the law, and consequently, taking the destruction of their cattle as a rebuke, they could not but dread farther punishment from this prophet of the Jews, who was come to vindicate the neglected institutions of Moses. Wherefore, this instance of his power terrified them, they with one accord foolishly besought him, in the most earnest manner, to depart out of their country. It seems they were altogether ignorant of his goodness, notwithstanding he had given them a striking proof of it in the recovery of the demoniacs. The request of the Gadarenes therefore, being a sufficient reason for his withdrawing from such a stupid people, he entered into his vessel, and returned to the country from whence he had come; leaving to them a valuable pledge of his love, and to us a noble pattern of perseverance in well-doing, even when our kindnesses are contemned, or it may be, requited with injuries; for notwithstanding the men from whom the devils had been expelled intreated him to take them along with him, (see Mark v. 18.) fearing perhaps that their torments might return after he was gone, He ordered them to stay behind, as a standing monument both of his power and goodness; very proper to induce the Gadarenes to believe, when they found their miracle real, and that Jesus could restrain the devils, as well when absent as present. And this was the reason that, in the instance before us, Jesus acted contrary to his usual practice; ordering the men to go and publish the miracle among all their relations and acquaintance. See Luke viii. 39. Besides, there were many heathens in Gadara

Gadara and the neighbourhood, upon whom the publication of his miracles would not have the idle effect it was apt to have on the Jews; or he might give this order, because he did not intend to return soon into that part of the country.

REMARKS ON THE DEMONIACS IN THE GOSPEL.

Why those demoniacs were so frequent at or about the time of our Saviour's coming, and perhaps more especially in and about the place of his ministry, though we may not be able to see all the reasons, yet it appears probable, that as the great end of his incarnation was *to destroy the works of the devil*, therefore the wise Disposer of all events might permit that apostate spirit to exert himself, and to display his tyranny in an unusual manner, that Christ's triumph over him might be more signal and manifest. Why such demoniacs were suffered at all, these reasons are offered: I. To confirm us in our belief of the reality of the agency of good and bad spirits, which surely, none who believe the Gospel can doubt or deny; and to convince us of the divine power of Christ, whose words they hear and obey with terrible confusion. II. To exercise the patience and increase the reward of those, who are at any time tried by these and the like temptations of Satan, as in the case of Job. III. To convince unbelievers what blackness of darkness, what horrors and punishments remain for those who shall be wholly given up to the power of these evil spirits. See the *Reflections* at the end of the next Chapter: Nor can I help referring my reader, desirous of improving the Scripture history, to the
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contemplations of the excellent Bp. Hall, which will afford him at once the truest pleasure, and the greatest profit.

CHAP. IX.

[Ver. 1—7. And he entered into a ship.] *And returning into a vessel, he crossed the lake, and came to his own city, [of Capernaum, where he had dwelt after leaving Nazareth] ver. 2. when they brought to him a paralytic lying on a bed; and Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, Have confidence, my son! your sins are forgiven.* Heylin. See this miracle more circumstantially described in Mark ii. and Luke v. In St. Luke's miracle, there is a very material circumstance premised, namely, that some Pharisees and doctors of the law, who came out of every town in Galilee and Judea, and from Jerusalem, were sitting by him, while he was teaching,—*and the power of the Lord was present to heal them, i. e. those his auditors, of their spiritual maladies; and then it immediately follows, and behold, men brought on a bed, or couch, one sick of a palsy; and because there was then no other access to Christ, by reason of the crowd which encompassed him, they let down the paralytic through the tiles upon his couch, into the midst before Jesus.*

The Scribes who were present, being disappointed in their curiosity (for they expected to see an outward bodily cure) and startled to hear our Lord express himself in such unusual terms, took offence, and in their hearts condemned him of blasphemy, for assuming to himself an authority to dismiss sin, ver. 3. Christ, to whom the secrets of all hearts

are open, knew their thoughts. He, therefore, to instruct them and us in a matter of so great importance, reasoned in the following manner: "Which is easiest, think ye,—to deliver a mind from the power of sin, or a body from disease?—To cure the body is certainly the easiest work; for it requires another kind of power to reach and operate upon the mind, to rectify its vicious inclinations, and repair the disorders induced by sin. This I have effected in the paralytic here present. I have *dismissed his sins*; I have healed his distempered soul: but as this divine operation is internal, and consequently not discernible to you that are spectators, I will add a second miracle, which, though in all respects of an inferior nature, yet has the advantage of being visible, and therefore is a proper proof of what I assert. Judge of my power to heal souls by the cures I work upon bodies: And, that all may know the authority I have to dismiss sins, and cure the depravations of the mind, I say unto thee, O paralytic, arise, take up thy couch, and return to thine own home." The sick person did so, and they were all amazed, and glorified God. We may extend the same way of reasoning to all miraculous cures recorded in the Gospel, and infer from all and every of them the divine power of our Saviour to reform the souls of men. See Heylin, and the Reflections at the end of this chapter.

Ver. 9. As Jesus passed thence, he saw a man, &c.] Porphyry and Julian have blamed St. Matthew for following one of whom he had so little knowledge, thus *rashly*, as they are pleased to call it. But as it is evident that this publican lived in Capernaum, or near it, he must often have heard our Lord preach; for it was the town where he

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ordinarily resided, and probably he might have been witness to a number of Christ's miracles; wherefore the opposers of our religion must forgive us if we affirm, that there was neither rashness nor imprudence in the readiness which Matthew shewed to follow Jesus. He might have been his disciple long before this, and only waited for permission to attend him. But further, Why may we not suppose that a divine and supernatural influence attended this call of our Lord? which considering all its circumstances, may well be acknowledged as great a miracle as any of those we have before reviewed. Dr. Doddridge makes the following pleasing and pious remarks upon the event. "Let us view, with humble wonder and pleasure, this further instance of the *condescension* and *grace* of the Redeemer, in the call of Matthew: His condescension in calling to so near an attendance, and so intimate a friendship, a man who was a publican, infamous as that employment was; and his grace, which could immediately inspire this publican with so firm a resolution of quitting all the profits of that employment; that he might reduce himself to circumstances of life as precarious as those of his divine master. Many, no doubt, censured him as a rash enthusiast and a lunatic, rather than as a sober convert; but he is even now reaping the abundant reward: His loss is gain, and his contempt glory." See on ch. x. 2, &c.

Ver. 11—13. And the Pharisees saw it.] See on ver. 9. Instead of *whole*, ver. 12. Dr. Waterland reads *well*; and ver. 13. *I will have mercy rather than sacrifice; for I am not come to call saints, but,* &c. The Pharisees did not indeed direct their discourse to Jesus, but having spoken so loud as to let all the guests hear their censure, he could not avoid

meekly

meekly putting them in mind, that it is sick people only who have need of a physician; to insinuate, that since the Pharisees thought themselves righteous persons, they had no need of his company; whereas the publicans, whom they called sinners, being sick, had the best title to it; and that as nobody ever blamed a physician for going into the company of the patients whose cure he had undertaken, so they could not blame him for conversing with *sinners*, since he did it to reclaim them. Our Saviour moreover desired his adversaries to consider the meaning of what God had declared by the Prophet Hosea, ch. vi. 6. *I will have mercy rather than sacrifice*: "Where the one or the other must be omitted, let *mercy*, by all means,—let the work of compassion, beneficence, and love, be preferred to sacrifice, to instituted forms, and merely external ordinances; which, though necessary in themselves, and highly useful, as ordained of God, and as means to an important end, must yet never destroy that end, but give place and preference to it; for of all things *mercy*, acts of humanity and benevolence, are most pleasing to the God of love; and of all acts, as being the most humane and beneficent, the salvation of lost sinners from destruction and death: And this is the great work for which I came into the world; this is the great end I have to accomplish: *I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*: The repentance of righteous persons is not so much the object of my attention as the conversion of sinners."

Ver. 14—17. Then came to him the disciples of John.] The alterations of Dr. Waterland and the manuscript are, ver. 16. *A patch of new cloth upon, &c.—For the patch will draw from the garment, and a worse rent is made.* Ver. 17. *Old skins; else the skins*

skins will burst, and—are lost; but, &c. into new skins. In the law we find only one fast day enjoined, namely the 10th of the 7th month, on which the national atonement was made. But the Jews, of their own accord, observed many other days of fasting. See Isaiah lviii. 3. In our Lord's time days of this kind were more frequent than ever; especially among the Pharisees, who, according to the practice of their sect, fasted probably twice a week; see Luke xviii. 12. And therefore, as Jesus did not pretend to teach his disciples a more lax kind of discipline than John and the Pharisees, the disciples of John were surprised to find them overlooking so essential a duty. Further, by the similitude of a piece of *new cloth* put upon an *old garment*, ver. 16. He shewed his hearers, that to have laid on his disciples precepts of frequent abstinence at a time when he was employing them to preach the Gospel, which abolishes all rites and ceremonies whatsoever, would have been as incongruous as to fill up the holes of an old thread-bare garment with pieces of new cloth, which cannot be joined to the old but with the danger of making the rent worse. Christ would not discourage his disciples by over rigorous institutions; and it is unfit that his religion should be burdened with them. He suits the duties of his people to their circumstances, and kindly proportions their work to their strength, with a tender regard to their weakness, till by degrees they may be fitted for the most difficult and humbling services. See Isai. xl. 11. From his example, and the whole genius of his gospel, we should learn to make all proper allowances to those about us; that we may teach them and train them up, as they are able to bear it: Not crushing them under any unnecessary load,

load, nor denying them any indulgence which true friendship will permit us to grant them; lest the good ways of God should be misrepresented, disgraced, and abandoned, through our imprudent, though well-meaning security. A caution to be peculiarly observed in our conduct toward young persons, and not to be forgotten, with respect to those who, like the disciples here in question, are training up for the ministerial office. See Doddridge, *Carpzov.* Defence of this Hebrew Bible, p. 220, and Albert's observations, p. 71.

Ver. 18. While he spake.] As St. Mark has given us the history of these extraordinary miracles so much more circumstantially than St. Matthew, we shall postpone our observations upon them till we come to Mark v. 22. See also Luke viii. 41. Instead of *is even now dead*, Dr. Waterland reads, *was even now a dying, or is at the point of death.*

Ver. 32, 33. A dumb man, &c.] "It was never so seen, even in Israel itself, said they—though it be a people among whom God had wrought such unparalleled wonders." This reflection was perfectly just; for no one of the prophets that we read of in the Old Testament appears to have wrought so many beneficial miracles in his whole life as our Lord did in this one afternoon; when he raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead, healed the woman that had a bloody issue, restored two blind men to their sight, cured a dumb demoniac, &c. &c. See on ch. xv. 36. and, respecting the calumnies of the Pharisees in the next verse, ch. xii. 24.

Ver. 36. Because they fainted.] The original, *ἐκλελυμένοι*, denoted here a kind of *faintness*; the weakness which is caused by hunger and weariness. See ch. xv. 32. Heb. xii. 3. There are notwithstanding several Greek manuscripts which read, as

does also the Vulgate, *weary fatigued*. These multitudes came not only from the several parts of Galilee, but also from Judea and Idumea, from beyond Jordan, and the borders of Tyre and Sidon. Elfsner seems to have proved beyond dispute, that ἐπὶ περιμένοι, rendered *scattered abroad*, signifies properly “exposed to every invading danger,” as sheep are when *thrown up, and abandoned* by the shepherd. Dr. Heylin reads, with the margin of our Bible, *were tired and lay down*. As the people were utterly neglected by their Scribes and Pharisees, the appointed public teachers, who ought to have instructed them, the indefatigable zeal with which our Lord now spread the knowledge of divine things, was most seasonable and acceptable. The teachers just now mentioned were blind, perverse, lazy guides, who every day discovered more and more their ignorance and wickedness. They either neglected the office of teaching altogether, or they filled the people’s minds with high notions of ritual observances and traditions, to the utter disparagement of moral duties, which in a manner they trampled under foot; so that instead of serving God, they served their own glory, their gain, and their belly; wherefore, any appearance of religion which they had was wholly feigned and hypocritical, insomuch that they rather did hurt by it, than were of real service to the interests of virtue. Besides, the common people being distracted by the disagreeing factions of the Pharisees and Sadducees, knew not what to choose or refuse; their case therefore called loudly for the compassion of Jesus, which indeed was never wanting to them at any time; for he always cherished the tenderest affections towards his countrymen. But it flowed particularly on this occasion, when he considered that they were
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in great distress for want of spiritual food. See the next ch. ver. 6. Elfner, Wolfius, Macknight. It may be proper just to observe, that the 10th chapter should certainly begin at the 35th verse; for the connection is absolutely and intirely broken by the present division.

REFLECTIONS ON THE MIRACULOUS CURES WROUGHT BY JESUS CHRIST.

When we read with what success the blind, the lame, the deaf, the lepers and in short the diseased of every kind were addressed to him, so that no patient ever came to him in vain; but all distempers, though of the most malignant nature, though most obstinate, and of many years continuance, though such as have baffled all other remedies, were infallibly cured by him;—when I say we read these instances of his Almighty Power and Goodness, our *own spiritual infirmities* should occur to our thoughts.

Have you nothing to ask of this divine physician? Do you not with a sigh, and as it were with some sort of envy, think how fortunate they were, who had such easy access to him in Palestine? And does not their success raise some hope in your breast? In reason it ought to do so; for *spiritual maladies* are his proper province, and it is in the cure of these that his goodness principally delights to exert itself; the following capacities are required on our part.

First, whosoever would be cured of any spiritual malady, must go to Christ.

It is a wretched mistake of ordinary Christians, that they consider Christ as *inaccessable* since his ascension, and conceive of Him only as highly exalted, and remote at an unmeasurable distance from

from us : but this comes from not effectually believing, or, what amounts to the same thing, not considering the DIVINITY of our Saviour.

The divine nature of Christ has been treated of late as a speculative question to dispute about : but it is really one of the most practical, as well as one of the most important points of our religion. For by this He is *every where* present : He is *in* every man, as numberless passages of scripture testify. Every man therefore is to seek Christ, where He is nearest at hand ; *i. e.* within himself. But few men look into themselves : their soul is always abroad (if I may so speak) and converse only with outward things. Those who would approach to Christ, must turn way from the world, and all outward sensible objects, to seek him inwardly, as in their hearts, by devout recollection, and they will then infallibly find him.

Secondly, when by devotion we are thus introduced into the presence of Christ, we must declare our wants to Him, we must humbly expose our miseries before him, with earnest prayer for deliverance.

In the third place *faith*, *i. e.* a worthy opinion of Christ. This is apparently necessary ; for to distrust his power or his goodness is an injurious thought, which renders us unworthy of his favour. And it is remarkable that he insists upon faith more than any other qualification, in the persons who apply to him for relief. See Dr. Heylin's Lectures, p. 161. Dr. Jortin also, in his remarks on Ecclesiastical History, vol. ii. p. 16. has some observations on this subject.

CHAP. X.

Ver. 1. And when he had called them.] The distinction of the sacred writings into chapters and verses, which is a modern invention to facilitate references, has with that advantage great inconveniencies, because it often breaks that thread of discourse, which is the clue to lead us into the meaning of what follows. It will be seen how reasonable this reflection is, if we look back to the 30th verse, &c. of the preceding chapter, where we read that Jesus, *beholding the multitudes*, (in their spiritual capacities, which were ever the principal object of his regard) *had compassion on them, because they were tired and laid down, as sheep that had no shepherd*; Then saith he, &c. After this, as he himself was ever foremost, on all proper occasions, to do what he commanded others, He passed the following night in prayer. See Luke vi. 12, 13. And the next morning he chose *twelve* from among his disciples, whom he constituted *apostles*; *persons sent*, i. e. *especial messengers*, and sent them forth with a peculiar commission, as *shepherds*, to raise and guide those dejected forlorn *sheep*, who had moved his compassion; and as *labourers*, to be employed in the harvest which was now mature, and fit for the threshing-floor.

Ver. 2. Now the names, &c.] In the catalogue, *Simeon* and *Andrew*, the sons of *Jonah*, are named first; not because they were greater in dignity than the brethren of the apostolical college, but because they had become Christ's disciples before them. Whatever was the reason for ranking the apostles in the catalogue, we are certain they are not ranged according to their dignity: for had that

that been the case, the order of the names would not have been different in the different Evangelists; neither would the apostle Paul, in speaking of the pillars of the church, Galat. ii. 9. have mentioned James the less before Peter.

James and *John* the sons of Zebedee, were also fishermen; they dwelt in Capernaum, and seem to have been rather in better circumstances than Peter and Andrew; for the Gospel speaks of their having *hired servants* to assist them in their business. John is thought to have been the youngest of all the apostles; yet he was old enough to have been the follower of John the Baptist before he came to Christ.—On this, or some other occasion, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, obtained the surname of Boanerges, *i. e.* the sons of Thunder, perhaps because of the vehemency and impetuosity of their tempers. Accordingly their spirit shewed itself in the desire they expressed to have the Samaritans destroyed by fire from heaven, because they refused to lodge Jesus, in his way from Jerusalem. It appeared also in their ambition to become the great officers of state in their master's kingdom, which they supposed would be a secular one. Besides, John's writings shew that he was a man of a warm and affectionate turn of mind. The warmth of his temper gave him a singular fitness for friendship, in which he was not only amiable above all the disciples, but happy as it rendered him the object of Christ's peculiar love, a love which will do him honour to the end of the world. As for James, his being put to death by Herod, is a proof that his zeal was uncommon, and that it moved him to be more active and bold than the rest in the work of the Gospel. Had it been otherwise, he would not have become the object either of He-
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rod's jealousy or resentment. *Philip* is said to have been a native of Bethsaida the town of Peter and Andrew. He was originally a disciple of the Baptist; but he left him to follow Jesus, as soon as he became acquainted with him at Jordan. John i. 44.—*Bartholemew* is supposed to have been the disciple called *Nathaniel*, whose conversion is related, John i. 45. The ancients tell us, he was a native of Cana, and skilled in the law.—*Matthew* was a rich publican of Capernaum: he was otherwise named *Levi*, and left his gainful employment for the sake of Christ. He wrote the Gospel, to which his name is prefixed, and was the son of one *Alpheus*, of whom we know nothing but the name. There is nothing said of *Thomas* before his conversion: however, it is conjectured that, like the rest, he was of mean extraction, and because he is mentioned among those who went a fishing, John xxi. 2, 3. it is supposed that he was a fisherman by occupation. He obtained the surname of *Didymus*, probably because he was a twin, and made himself remarkable by continuing longer than his brethren to doubt of Christ's resurrection. In the college of apostles, besides James the son of Zebedee and brother of John, Judas Escariot who betrayed his master, and Simeon surnamed Peter, we find, *James*, surnamed *the Less*, or *Younger* (Mark iii. 18.) and *Lebbeus*, the brother of James the Less and *Simon* surnamed Zelotes. James the Less, Judas Thaddeus, and Zelotes were brothers, and sons of one *Alpheus* or *Cleophas*, who was likewise a disciple, being one of the two to whom our Lord appeared on the road to Emmaus after his resurrection. They were called Christ's *brethren* (Mat. xiii. 55.) that is his cousins in which sense the word is used, Lev. x. 4. It seems their
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mother Mary was sister to Mary our Lord's mother; for it was no unusual thing among the Jews to have more children than one of a family called by the same name. The three apostles, therefore, who go by the name of our Lord's brethren, were really his cousin-germans. James the Less and Judas Thaddeus, wrote the epistles which bear their names. This James was a person of great authority among the apostles; for in the council which met at Jerusalem to decide the dispute about the necessity of circumcision, we find him, as president of the meeting, summing up the debate, and wording the decree.

Thus were the foundations of the church laid in twelve illiterate Galileans, who being at first utterly ignorant of the nature and end of their office, and destitute of the qualifications to discharge the duties of it—integrity excepted, were the most unlikely persons in the world to confound the wisdom of the wise; to baffle the power of the mighty; to overturn the many false religions which then flourished every where, under the protection of civil government; and, in a word, to reform the universally-corrupted manners of mankind. Had human precedence been to make choice of instruments for so grand an undertaking, doubtless such as were remarkable for deep science, strong reasoning, and prevailing eloquence, would have been pitched upon, and these endowments probably would have been set off with the external advantages of wealth and power. But lo! the wisdom of God, infinitely superior to that of men, acted quite differently in this matter: for the *treasure of the Gospel was committed to earthen vessels, that the excellency of its power might in all countries be seen to be of God.* Accordingly, the religion which
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these Galileans taught through the world, without having at all applied themselves to letters, exhibited a far juster notion of things than the Grecian and Roman philosophers were able to attain though their lives were spent in contemplation and study. Hence, by its own intrinsic splendor, as well as by the external glory of the miracles which accompanied it, this religion shewed itself to be altogether of divine original. Besides, it was attended with a success answerable to its dignity and truth. It was received every where by the bulk of mankind with the highest applause, as something they had hitherto been seeking in vain, while the maxims and precepts of the philosophers never spread themselves farther than their particular schools. It was therefore with the highest wisdom that the foundations of the church were thus laid in the labours of a few weak illiterate fishermen: for with irresistible evidence it demonstrated that the immense fabric was at first raised, and is still sustained, not by the arm of flesh, but purely by the hand of Almighty God. See Macknight. Dr. Waterland reads *Zealot*, ver. 4. instead of *Cananite*.

Ver. 5. Go not into the way, &c.] It may seem strange that our Lord neither preached himself to the Gentiles, nor allowed his disciples to preach among them, during his own life-time; especially when it is evident that he came into the world on purpose to destroy the polytheism of the heathens, their idolatrous worship, and to establish the knowledge of the true God, and of the only mediator between God and man, and of the right method of attaining his favour: but our wonder will cease when the reason of his conduct is understood. As the Jews were the only people in the world who believed in the one true God. Before his messengers at-

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tempted to preach him to the heathens, it was fit that they should prove their mission, to the conviction of the Jews; instruct them more fully in the fundamental doctrines of religion, and correct what errors had crept into their faith. Besides Christianity was to be propagated through the world, not only by the force of its own intrinsic excellence, and by the miracles wherewith it was accomplished, but it was to make its way also by the evidence which it derived from the Jewish prophecies, and by the light thrown upon it, considered as the perfection of that grand scheme which was begun in the first ages, and carried on under various dispensations from time to time, till it obtained a more complete and lasting form under the Jewish œconomy. It was highly expedient, therefore, that a competent number of Jews should be converted to Christianity, who might publish it to the rest of the world, with all the evidence that was proper to be offered: but if, on account of the former revelation made to the Jews, it was absolutely fit that the new revelation should be preached by them to the rest of the world, it was necessary that the Gospel, at the first, should be confined to them; because, had it been preached to the Gentiles, that circumstance alone would have made the Jews reject it universally. It is well known how high the prejudices of the Apostles themselves ran on this head, even after they had received the gifts of the Spirit; being excessively offended with Peter, one of their number, who, by a vision from heaven had with difficulty been prevailed upon to preach to the proselyte Cornelius. Nay, they were hardly brought to believe, that God intended to bestow the Gospel on the Gentiles, when they saw them receive the greatest of its privileges themselves, even the gifts
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of the Spirit; and though after this they preached to the Gentiles, yet, wherever they came, their custom was to begin at the Jews, if there were any in the place, that all offence might be prevented; and on the Jews rejecting the Gospel, they turned to the Gentiles. Acts xiii. 46. Thus, as the Apostle tells us, Rom. xiv. 8. *Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers, namely, concerning the conversion of the Gentiles, and that the Gentiles might glorify God on account of his mercy; the mercy of the new covenant which they enjoyed by their conversion to Christianity.* Had Jesus Christ been a minister of the uncircumcision, i. e. had he preached the Gospel at all to the Gentiles, the Jews would have rejected it; so that the proselytes, and such as held the faith of the proselytes, which the wiser sort of the Gentiles seem generally to have done, would not have become Christ's disciples with such ease and readiness. The reason was, the evidence of the Gospel being greatly weakened by the unbelief of the Jews, the converts among the Gentiles would have been few in comparison, and by that means, the promises made to the fathers, that in Christ all nations should be blessed, would not have been confirmed, or so fully accomplished as it is by the scheme which Providence hath actually chosen. See Macknight. When our Saviour says, *enter not into any city of the Samaritans*, he means, "enter not with a design to preach." It is true, in the beginning of his ministry, our Lord himself preached to the Samaritans with great success, John iv. 41, 42. and, therefore, had he sent his Apostles among them, numbers in all probability would have been induced to believe; but the inveterate enmity which the Jews bore to the Sa-

maritans made the conversion of the latter improper at this time, for the reasons mentioned.

Ver. 8. Raise the dead.] In several copies this clause is wanting; for which reason, and because the disciples did not raise any persons from the dead that we read of, till after Christ's ascension, Dr. Mill takes it for an interpolation. But his opinion is ill-founded; as it is certain that this, with several other articles in the Apostles' first commission, have a direct relation to the period comprehended under that more extensive commission which they received after their Master's resurrection. See ver. 18, 21, 23. Whitby, and Wetstein. That the direction at the end of this verse, *freely, or gratis ye have received, freely give*, relates to the miraculous cures which the Apostles were empowered to perform, and not to the stated offices of the apostolical function, is evident from Luke x. 7. where our Lord, in giving a like commission to the LXX, bids them eat and drink what was set before them, because the labourer was worthy of his hire; nay, in this very charge, no sooner did he order the Apostles to give freely, than he forbade them to *provide gold, &c. because the workman is worthy of his meat; [deserves his maintenance.* Heylin.] plainly intimating, that while they were preaching, they had a right of maintenance from those who enjoyed the benefit of their labours, and should, in the course of divine Providence, be supplied with all things necessary. Accordingly we find the Apostles receiving such maintenance, and insisting upon it as their due, 1 Cor. ix. 4, 5, 14. Galat. vi. 6. See Macknight.

Ver. 10. Nor scrip for your journey.] In the account which St. Mark gives of the repetition of these instructions, immediately before the disciples took

took their journey, he says, they were permitted to be *shod with sandals*, ch. vi. 9. The *sandal* was a piece of strong leather or wood, fastened to the sole of the foot with strings, which they tied round the foot and ankle; but the *shoe* was a kind of short boot, that covered the foot and part of the leg, and was a more delicate piece of dress than the sandals. See Calmet on the word *sandals*, and Lightfoot. St. Mark says, ch. vi. 8: that they were allowed to take a staff; which Calmet thinks may be reconciled with St. Matthew, by attending to the antiquity of the Hebrew word שֵׁבֶט *shebet*, answering to the Greek word ῥάβδος: for, as the Hebrew signifies any sort of *rod*, whether club, staff, sceptre, or pole. He thinks *the staff*, which, according to St. Matthew, the disciples were prohibited to use, may have been a *pole* for carrying a burden on; an accoutrement which was useless, as they were not allowed to carry any provisions with them; nor any spare clothes; whereas the *staff*, which by St. Mark's account he permitted them to take, was a *walking staff*, very proper for those who were to perform a journey with expedition. But the more probable solution of the difficulty seems to be, that such of the Apostles as had staves in their hands, might take them; as for those that were walking without them, they were not to provide them; for, as the Providence of God was to supply them with all necessaries, to have made the least preparation for their journey would have implied a disbelief of their Master's promise. Dr. Waterland reads here, *Nor yet a staff*.

Ver. 16. Behold, I send you forth as sheep, &c.] Considering the nature of the tidings which the Apostles were now sent out to publish, namely, that the *kingdom of heaven was at hand*; the number and

variety of miraculous cures they were enabled to perform, in confirmation of their doctrine; and the greatness of the benefits they were empowered to confer upon the families who should entertain them kindly; it is reasonable to think that they were flattering themselves with the hopes of great honour and acceptance wherever they came. In the mean time, the event was by no means to answer their expectation; they were every where to be despised, persecuted, delivered up into the hands of public justice, and punished as evil-doers. Our Lord, therefore, in the most fair and generous manner, forewarned them of these things; made them large promises of the divine aid, and gave them directions with respect to their conduct in every circumstance. *Behold, I send you forth, &c.* "I send you forth weak and defenceless amongst a cruel and wicked people." *Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.* "On the one hand, be so prudent as not to irritate them, either by your behaviour or doctrine unnecessarily, ch. vii. 6. And on the other, let not your prudence degenerate into craft, lest it lead you to betray the truth, or to encourage men in their evil practice. Join prudence and innocence together; rendering yourselves remarkable for integrity amidst the greatest temptations, and for meekness under the greatest provocation."

Ver. 17—18. But beware of men.] "Though I order you to be meek and patient under injuries, I do not mean that you should not be on your guard, and, if possible, avoid them: no, the more circumspect you are, the better; for, after all, you will meet with many indignities, and often be in danger of death, even from the hand of public justice." *They will deliver you up to the sanhedrim, or consistories, and scourge you in their synagogues.* Scourging is a
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fort of discipline which has long since been used in the synagogues, where they keep their courts. See L'Enfant's introduction.—*And ye shall be brought before governors, &c.* These things did not happen while these Apostles were on their first mission, but after Christ's ascension. See Acts iv. 6, 7. v. 40. xii. 3. &c. &c.—*For a testimony against them and the Gentiles:* "All these things are ordered to befall you, that your innocence may appear, and that the truth of the Gospel may be demonstrated." Had the Apostles never come before the supreme powers, nor defended their cause in the presence of kings and governors, it might have been said, that because Christianity could not bear a strict examination from able judges, it was preached to none but men of vulgar understandings, who were not capable of detecting it: but when persons of the highest distinction for birth, fortune, capacity, and learning had the Gospel laid before them, in the defences which the Apostles and first preachers of it were obliged to make at the public tribunals of every country, its standing such a tribunal was certainly a great confirmation of its truth to persons of inferior note. Wherefore, as Jesus here foretold, the bringing of the Apostles *before kings*, became a testimony of their innocence, and of the truth of the Gospel, and consequently an undeniable proof of the guilt both of Jews and Gentiles who neglected it. See Macknight, Clarke, and the histories of the first ages of the church.

Ver. 19, 20. But when they deliver you up, take no thought.] *Be not solicitous.* Wat. This direction was repeated on several occasions afterwards, particularly Luke xii. 11. Mark xiii. 11. The Apostles, being illiterate men, and wholly unacquainted with the laws of the different countries whither they

they were to go, as well as with the forms of their courts, their Master foresaw that they would be in great perplexity, when they appeared as criminals before persons of the first distinction. He foresaw, likewise, that this circumstance would occur to themselves, and render them anxious to meditate before-hand by what apology they might best defend so noble a cause. More than once, therefore, he expressly forbade them to be in the least *solicitous* about the defences they were to make, nor so much as to premeditate any part of them; promising to afford them, on all occasions, the aid of their Father's Spirit, who would inspire them to speak in a manner becoming the cause they were to defend.

Ver. 22. Ye shall be hated of all men.] There is a peculiar emphasis in the words *for my name's sake* in this place. The Apostles and first Christians set themselves in opposition both to the Jewish and pagan religions, declaring the nullity of the former, and urging the renunciation of the latter in all its forms, as matter of indispensable necessity. On the most tremendous penalties, they required every man, without exception, to believe in Christ, and submit implicitly to his authority; a demand most galling to the pride of their princes, priests, and philosophers. Moreover, having a lively sense of the importance of the things which they preached, they urged them not in a cold and indifferent manner, but with the utmost fervency. Need it be matter of wonder, then, that in every country such a furious storm of persecution arose against them, and the religion they taught, and that they were treated as the filth and off-scourings of the earth?

Ver. 23. But when they persecute you, &c.]
 "Let not the persecutions you are to meet with, in any period of your ministry, discourage you; but"

when you are sore pressed in one city, flee unto another, where you will meet with an asylum: *For I assure you, in spite of all opposition, your labours shall be attended with such success, that you shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the son of man be come*; i. e. according to the general interpretation, “before he comes to execute vengeance upon the Jews, by the destruction of their devoted city.” The destruction of Jerusalem by Titus is often called the *coming of the Son of man*. See ch. xxiv. 27, 37, 39, 44. Luke xviii. 8. Macknight differs from this interpretation, and gives the following: “Before ye have carried the glad tidings of the Gospel to the several cities of Israel, my kingdom shall be established in many places; so that in the midst of the hottest persecution, you may always expect to find some who will befriend you. See Olearius, and Whitby.

Ver. 29. Fear them not therefore, &c.] The meaning of this verse is, that the disciples ought not to conceal the truth which had been committed to them, notwithstanding all the contradictions they might meet with in the course of their ministry; because the design of God was, that the Gospel which Jesus Christ revealed to them in private, and which was a mystery to all the rest of mankind, (ch. ii. 27. 1 Cor. ii. 9. &c.) should by them be published all over the world. Our blessed Saviour applies here a proverbial saying to the Gospel; see Mark iv. 22. Luke viii. 17. xii. 2. *There is nothing covered, &c.* This is a general rule, which may admit of several exceptions. Jesus Christ applies it to different subjects. Here he gives his disciples to understand, that it was his design they should openly and courageously reveal to the world those truths, which

which the time and circumstances did not then permit him to disclose every where.

Ver. 27. What I tell you in darkness.] The last words, *that preach ye upon the house-tops*, refer to another custom of making things public, by proclaiming them on the flat roofs of the houses in the east. The *mollahs* among the Turks at this day proclaim on the top of their mosques, that "God is great, and Mahomet is his prophet," as a signal for the people to come to public prayers. See on ch. xxiv. 17. and Wynne's New Translation.

Ver. 32, 33. Whosoever will confess me—will I confess] Acknowledge, &c. *MS.* To *confess*, here signifies, publicly to acknowledge Jesus Christ for the promised Messiah, and the son of God. This confession extends to the receiving of his whole doctrines, and even the least of his commands. To *deny* Jesus Christ is, not to acknowledge, or to *disown* him; to *renounce* his doctrine, and be ashamed of the profession of it. See the passages in the margin, and ch. vi. 33. There is an unspeakable majesty in this member of our Lord's discourse: Though in the lowest state of humanity, he declared, that his *confessing us* before God is the greatest happiness, and his *denying us* the greatest misery that can befall us.

Ver. 34—36. Think not that I am come, &c.] "Because the prophets have spoken glorious things of the peace and happiness which shall flourish under the Messiah, whom they have named, for that reason, *the Prince of Peace*; you may imagine that I am come to put the world into that happy state immediately: But this is far from being the case; for though the nature of my government be such as might produce abundant felicity, inasmuch as my religion breathes nothing but love, Men will not lay

lay aside their animosity, nor will they exercise a mutual friendship among themselves, as soon as the Gospel is preached to them. No; such is their weakness, that they shall make the Gospel itself an occasion of such bitter dissensions, that it will seem as if I came on purpose to sow the seeds of discord among the children of men." These bad consequences, however, are not to be peculiar to Christianity; and therefore must not be imputed to it, but to the wickedness of men. The deists indeed boldly affirm, that the diversity of opinions and worships which prevailed among the heathens, never produced either bloodshed or disorder, nor disturbed the peace of mankind. But their assertion is false. It is true, we are not so well acquainted with the religious disputes of the heathens as we are with our own: Not because no such disputes were ever known, but because the historians of those times did not think them worthy of being transmitted to posterity. Some flagrant instances, however, are accidentally preserved, by which we may judge of the rest. Socrates, one of the best of the heathens, was put to death by the Athenians, the wisest and most learned of the Greeks, for teaching the unity of God, and the spirituality of the worship due to him. Aristotle the philosopher was also impeached for his opinions, and obliged to fly from Athens, lest he should have incurred the fate of Socrates. Antiochus Epiphanes raised a most violent and bloody persecution against the Jews, in their own country, on account of religion, in which many thousands perished for refusing to submit to the idolatrous worship which he had set up in the temple at Jerusalem. The Emperor Claudius banished the Jews from Italy for their religion, pretending that they were seditious. The religious

religious quarrels of the Egyptians, the fury with which they prosecuted them, and the disturbances they occasioned, are well known. And to name no more, was there ever any persecution raised by Christians, either against one another, or against infidels, more bloody, cruel and extensive, than the ten persecutions carried on by the Roman Emperors at the instigation of the philosophers? It is to no purpose to reply, that these were persecutions of men, who sat themselves to overturn the established religion of the countries where they lived. For while those men attacked them with the force of argument only they ought to have been repelled by no other weapon. And if they could not be thus quelled, their adversaries, instead of persecuting them, ought to have yielded to truth. Whilst the accounts of those persecutions stand on record, it must not be a little assurance that is able to bear the deists out in affirming, that the ancient heathen religions never inspired their votaries with a spirit of persecution. Yet it will not reflect any dishonour on Christianity that it should be allowed to have occasioned more disturbances than any other religion. On the contrary, it is rather a proof of its superior excellency; for, if Christianity animates the persons who believe it with greater zeal for truth, it is because it approves itself better worth the contending for. Its evidences are clear, and its tendencies better than those of any false religion, and therefore no wonder that men have espoused its interest more heartily. See Macknight, and Bp. Hoadley's sermons on the text.

Ver. 47. He that loveth father or mother, &c.] See Deut. xxxiii. 9. to which our Saviour manifestly alludes. "He who preferreth the friendship of his nearest relations, though the sweetest of all earthly satisfactions,

fatisfactions, to my religion; renouncing it, that he may enjoy their good will, is not worthy, being my disciple; does not deserve to be called a Christian." Our Lord told them this very properly, after having declared that their bitterest foes should be the members of their own families. L'Enfant, and Macknight.

THE CHARACTER OF JESUS VINDICATED FROM THE CHARGE OF ENTHUSIASM.

If Jesus had been an enthusiast, (see the note on ver. 16.) there was no time when the fanatic spirit would so forcibly have broken out, as at the critical juncture of sending his disciples abroad to convert the world. An enthusiast, possessed with the high glory of propagating and establishing a new religion, to arise and be denominated from himself, would have his spiritual passions kindled and inflamed to their utmost bearing, at the important moment of commencing his enterprize; but the words of Jesus upon this occasion bespeak their author to be perfectly cool, and collected within himself. *Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.* Let us reflect upon them with attention.

Though I am not altogether of opinion with those who consider the premonition so frequently repeated by Jesus to his followers, of the various persecutions which awaited the profession of his Gospel, as the clearest evidence of his prophetic spirit,—because I think a common observer of the state and genius of the then prevailing superstitions, might easily foresee what would be the early fate of a religion supported by no other powers than those of grace, when it openly opposed its truth and purity to a world sunk deep in error and confusion;—yet

so far must always be confessed, that this serious attention to the event would not have made part of the character of an heated and inflamed enthusiast. When we find, therefore, the founder of an holy religion calmly attentive to the reception his doctrine was likely to meet with from the people, and provident of the treatment his servants were seen to receive from the magistrate; we must needs conclude, that he then possessed himself in that dignity of repose, under a comprehensive view of his scheme, which became a great prophet, superior to all the infirmities as well as chance of humanity.

But his provision for faithful servants did not stop at the salutary warning here given them: when he hinted at the treatment of the world towards them, *behold, I send you forth as sheep, &c.* he directs what should be their conduct to the world; *be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves*; a direction, which none under the direction of a fanatic spirit would be either forward to give, or fond to see observed: for religious enthusiasm, as we know by sad experience, places its chief glory in despising human precedence, and in violating and trampling upon human peace. Its two great states or stages are the *suffering* and *triumphs* of its deluded instruments, and in both, this hot and fiery spirit fatally hurries them into the most mischievous extremes. The founder of our faith hath digged up by the very roots the whole system of imposture; he hath quelled the wildness of the stubborn, hot, and imprudent fanatic, in the command to be *wise as serpents*; he hath checked the ambition of the insolent and triumphant enthusiast, in the command to be *harmless as doves*; so that the unbelievers must either acquit him of those affections,

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or must retract what they seem so willing to allow him,—the greatness of his character and abilities ; for if we will credit those men, the great support of his character was, a well-directed enthusiasm ; and yet he effectually contrived to damp its influence at that very crisis, when an enthusiast would have let loose his genius, and given it the utmost force and moment.

In this account of well-directed enthusiasm, we have supposed it to consist of an equal mixture of *extravagance* and *art* ; the first betraying itself in the struggle, and the last in its application of the fruits of victory ; and whatever inconsistency there may appear to be in their representation, the fault lies only in the contradiction of our corrupt nature. It is commonly supposed, that the more wild and extravagant a fanatic temper is, the more clear it must needs be of all fraud and artifice ; but both reason and experience are ready to shew us our mistake. Fanaticism is a fire which heats the mind indeed ; but heats without purifying. It stimulates and ferments all the passions ; but it rectifies none of them : and thus leaving the appetites unsubdued, Pride, vanity, and ambition insinuate themselves into the impotent and disordered mind, under the disguise of purity, holiness, and perfection ; and while they are at work, religion, which lent them these more honest appellations, will be so far from curbing the owner in the use of oblique means, that the strongest influence of fanaticism will be naturally directed to push him upon them, as the best instruments for the ready introduction of what he calls the truth.

Nor does the physical state of the enthusiast's mind give any stronger check to fraudulent practice than the moral ; for when this passion or af-

fection hath taken possession of a great genius, who, if he chance to have a lively imagination, is as subject to its controul as the meanest, the violence of his fervours makes him impatient of stop or defect in what he takes to be the cause of God, and consequently makes him cast about for any kind of means to reprove or repair it; readily persuading himself that any means are lawful: and his superior genius will enable him to find them, and when found, to improve them in their utmost use, to all the arts of fraudulent address. Hence, if we examine the history of mankind, we shall see, that the founders of empires and false religions, which these artists contrive should support one another, were frantic enthusiasts, but at the same time sufficient masters of themselves to turn with proper address that spirit which they had catched and communicated, to the advancement of their proper schemes. And it is observable, that whenever one of these personated actors was not perfect in both his parts, he was soon hissed off the stage. The reason is evident; it arises from the nature of things. Without enthusiasm the adventurer could never kindle that fire in his followers, which is so necessary, to consolidate their mutual interests; for no one can heartily deceive numbers, who is not first of all deceived himself, or in other words, seems not to be in earnest. But then, on the contrary, when the spirit of fanaticism is sufficiently spread and inflamed, it can never produce any great or notable issue, unless the raiser and dictator of the machine be so far master of himself, as to be able to turn the point of this powerful instrument to the objects of his project and keep it constantly directed to their advancement.

Indeed

Indeed the successful directors of this drama have generally exhibited more of art in their later scenes, and more enthusiasm in their former; the reason of which too is not less evident: Fanaticism is a kind of ebullition or critical ferment of the infected mind, which a vigorous nature can work through, and by slow degrees be able to cast off. Hence history informs us of several successful impostors, who set out in all the blaze of fanaticism, and ended their career in all the depth and stillness of politics; A prodigy in our nature, but not the rarest, and exhibited with superior splendor by the famous Ignatius Loyola.

This illustrious person, who verified the observation of one that almost equalled him in his trade, "That a man is never so high, as when he does not know whither he is going," began his extacies in the mire, and yet ended in the direction and execution of councils, which even in his own lifetime, began to give the law to Christendom.

Amidst all these distractions of human reason; and obliquities of worldly politics, we see a spiritual empire suddenly arise; we mark its progress, we trace its extent, we examine its establishment; and comparing all its parts with their reference to a whole, we find it in effect to have, what was fancied of old Rome; every essential character of eternity; yet was this surprising revolution brought about by means entirely different from those by which all the great changes and establishments amongst mankind have been introduced; I mean fraud and fanaticism.

What then are we to conclude,—but that the religion of Jesus is as divine in its origin, as it is pure and perfect in its essence; and that its author was as free from all the visions and ob-

liquities of enthusiasm, as he was replete with all the wisdom and virtue of heaven? See bishop Warburton's sermons, vol. i. p. 283.

CHAP. XI.

Ver. 1. Had made an end of commanding.] Had finished his instructions to, &c. Heylin. *In their cities*—means “in the other cities of the Jews;” for the pronoun is often put without having a noun going before to which it refers. Compare Luke iv. 15. v. 17. Or else, by the *cities* here mentioned, we may understand those cities of Galilee of which the Apostles were. See Acts ii. 7. The attentive reader will observe, that the chapters are again very ill divided, as this verse should certainly close the last chapter. See Bengelius's Greek Testament, the divisions whereof are the most judicious I have met with.

Ver. 2. Now when John had heard, &c.] Mr. L'Enfant, with some others, thinks that John was so discouraged by his own long imprisonment, that he began himself to doubt whether Jesus was himself the Messiah; and agreeable to this he supposes, that when our Lord says, *happy is he that is not offended in me*, he meant it as a caution to John that he should be upon his guard against so dangerous a temptation. But considering what clear evidence John had before received by a miraculous sign from heaven, and what express and repeated testimonies he himself had born to Jesus, I cannot imagine this to have been possible; especially as he foresaw and foretold that he must himself quickly be laid aside. John iii. 30. But his disciples might very probably be *offended* at this circumstance, as well as with the freedom of Christ's conversation, so different from the

the austerity used among them, and therefore he might think it necessary to put them in the way of further satisfaction; not to say that the warmth of John's temper might render him something uneasy at the reserve which Christ maintained, and that he might imagine it agreeable to the good design of his own office thus to urge a more express declaration. This appears an easy and natural solution of the difficulty arising from this event. Some writers, however, and those of distinction, are of different sentiments, observing that John sent the message for his own sake principally. His disciples, it is said, came and related to him Christ's miracles, particularly the two resurrections which had been lately performed. But the more and greater miracles Jesus wrought, the higher must the opinion have been which the Baptists' disciples entertained of him. His miracles, instead of weakening, should have strengthened their faith in him, and in their master's testimony concerning him. Besides, had the greatness of his miracles really staggered their faith, it is not easy to understand how they should have been disposed to believe Christ's testimony concerning himself, rather than their master's; Not to mention that Jesus bad the disciples go, and carry his answer to John; *Go tell John what you hear and see*; plainly implying that John had sent the message for his own sake chiefly, and not for the sake of his disciples. The Baptist entertaining an high opinion of his own gift thought it was necessary that he should preach the Gospel and prepare men for the erection of Christ's kingdom. From the very beginning of his imprisonment, therefore, both he and his disciples had certainly been expecting that the Divine Power of which Jesus was every day giving fresh proofs, would have been exerted in bringing

bringing about his release ; and though they had not hitherto perceived any appearance of such a miracle, they had still waited with patience, and entertained hope of it : But when John got notice that twelve illiterate fishermen were chosen to preach the Gospel, and furnished with miraculous powers for that purpose, and that two persons of no consideration at all were raised from the dead, while he was suffered to lie idle and useless in prison ; he began at length to find, that Jesus did not put that value upon his services which he thought they deserved, and of consequence that no miracle would be wrought for his deliverance. His patience, therefore, being quite tired, he sent this message to Jesus, *Art thou He that should come, or do we look for another ?* Not as if he entertained any doubt of his being the Messiah, but by asking the question, he complained that Jesus had not acted the part which he thought the Messiah should have acted.—That this was the Baptist's frame of mind when he sent his disciples to Christ, may be gathered also from the answer which he received. Mr. Bell, in his excellent treatise on the divine missions of John the Baptist, and Jesus Christ, part iii. sect. 8. has shewn, that this remarkable message, viewed in every light, supplies us with one of the most satisfactory, circumstantial proofs of the integrity and divine character of Jesus and the Baptist, which the Gospel affords ; and whether we can point out the particular motives which actually induced the true Elias to send his disciples with such a message to the true Messiah, or not, is an inquiry of no real importance at all, however it might gratify our curiosity to be able to solve the question ; since in the mean time it appears abundantly plain, that no such message could on any account have been sent from John to Jesus, had

had they been in reality no better than imposters. See the note on ver. 4. The reader will find more on this subject in Jortin's discourses, p. 196. Bp. Atterbury's, vol. iii. p. 35. and Archbp. Tillotson's sermons, ferm. 117.

Ver. 4. Go, and shew John, &c.] This answer is a clear reference to a signal prophecy of Isaiah concerning the Messiah; and therefore it is manifest that Jesus referred the enquiries for conviction at once to the evidence of prophecies and miracles. The finger of God is manifest in the whole occurrence. It could not be by chance that John sent his disciples to propose this important question to our Lord, at the very time when he was enabled to give the fullest satisfaction to it, and to confirm in so remarkable a manner the testimony of the Baptist. It could not be by chance, that enquiry was made after his divine character, at that critical period when he was displaying the strongest marks of it; in the same hour when he was engaged in *curing many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits, and in giving sight to those who had been born blind*, (see Luke vii. 24.) We see then the propriety of this enquiry, without deducing it from any supposed doubts or discontents in the mind of the Baptist himself, or even any incredulity in his disciples. John had frequently declared our Lord to be the Messiah, which was indeed the grand purpose of his own mission. But without his doubting, or his disciples disbelieving this testimony, they must all alike have been sensible that this testimony could have no force, till it should be confirmed by the event, and till our Lord should prove himself to be what John asserted him to be. The prophets had described the Messiah: John had pointed out our Saviour to the world, as the person by them described.

scribed. His testimony, therefore, must have been overthrown, had it not afterwards appeared that *all things which John spake* of this man were true. Hence it was natural, nay, it was necessary, that he should send his disciples to our Lord, that they might see the prophetic descriptions of the Messiah, and the testimony of their Master verified in him. And when the business of his own mission was accomplished, when his doctrine and his testimony of our Lord's divine character had made the due impressions upon the people; when the report of the mighty works of Christ had reached him in prison, and he perceived that our Saviour began to display that divine power which the prophets had ascribed to the Messiah; he then saw this was the season pointed out to him by Providence for sending his disciples to make this enquiry. See Rotheram on the origin of faith.

Ver. 5. The blind receive their sight.] Nothing could be more apposite, natural, and convincing, than such an answer as this; which took its rise from what Christ was then doing, and rested on the most apparent testimony of God himself, in astonishing miracles, to which they knew their master made no pretences: (See John x. 41.) miracles of so beneficent a nature, that no austerities of a retired life were by any means comparable to them; and miracles receiving an additional lustre, from their being foretold by a prophet many ages before; even by Isaiah the prophet, by whom the Baptist was so particularly described, that, as he *himself* had frequently referred to him, (Matth. iii. 3. Luke iii. 4—6. John i. 23.) so his disciples must, no doubt, have made themselves peculiarly familiar with his writings. These, and many other particulars, are set in a most beautiful light by the masterly

masterly hand of Bp. Atterbury, in his posthumous
 sermons, vol. i. p. 41—50. Archbp. Tillotson also
 has largely shewn the correspondence between the
 prophecies and events here referred to. See his
 117th sermon, and Dr. Thomas Jackson's works,
 vol. ii. p. 470. The last circumstance mentioned
 in this verse, *The poor*, &c. distinguished the Mes-
 siah from all the heathen philosophers and priests;
 for whereas they concealed the mysteries or depths
 of their doctrines from the vulgar, and those who
 were not initiated, He opened his to every one,
 without distinction; to the poor as well as the rich,
 to the unlearned as well as the learned. It dis-
 tinguished him likewise from the prophets who went
 before him, they being chiefly sent to monarchs;
 whereas Christ discovered the treasures of life to
 the illiterate. It distinguished him from the Scribes
 and doctors of the Jews, who taught none but the
 rich, and charged very highly for their instructions,
 despising and neglecting the poor, who were stiled
 the *off-scourings of the earth*, and holding it as a
 maxim, that the Spirit rested upon the rich only.
 It might have convinced the Jews, that their ideas
 of the Messiah were false: They looked upon the
 Messiah as a temporal prince, who should subdue
 the world to their yoke; but He placed his glory in
 subduing sin, and in overcoming iniquity. It might
 have served to convince the Jews that he was disin-
 terested: Instead of paying his court to the great,
 he applied himself to the distressed; and instead of
 engaging the priests and Scribes for his disciples,
 he preached to the vulgar, and chose twelve illi-
 terate and poor men to be the propagators of his
 doctrine. To speak the blind to sight, to command
 the lame to walk, to restore the deaf to hearing by
 a single word, and to call the dead to life, were
 such

such miracles as plainly shewed him to be the Messiah. But these cures were only the cures of bodily diseases: His office was likewise to include in it the cure of our mental distempers; and therefore our blessed Lord adds, as the heightening and distinguishing criterion of his character, that *he preached the gospel to the poor*. Others put a different sense upon the clause Πτωχοὶ ἐυαγγελίζονται, translating it actively, *the poor preach the gospel*; as if Jesus intended to insinuate, that the Baptist had no reason to be displeased with the election of twelve illiterate fishermen to preach the Gospel, while he, whose gifts were far superior to theirs, was suffered to lie useless in prison,—because this also was one of the characters of the Messiah's reign, mentioned by Isaiah. According to this interpretation, our Lord's meaning was, "Go, and tell your master, that the miracles which you have seen me perform, are the very miracles which Isaiah long ago predicted the Messiah should perform; and that the persons I have chosen to assist me in preaching the Gospel, are such as the same prophet has pointed out for that work." See the passages in the margin, Mac-knight, and Sherlock.

Ver. 7, 8. What went ye out, &c.] These, and the following questions, are in the stile of the Hebrews; and, according to the idiom of their language, imply a strong negation. The reader by recurring to the book of Job will meet with many passages to conform this observation: So that, according to this interpretation, the meaning is, "When ye went into the wilderness to John, with what design did you go?—Not to see the reeds waving on the banks of Jordan;—nor because he made a magnificent appearance, &c. They went not to see a reed shaken with the wind;

i. e. no

i. e. no trifling, mean, wavering, or inconstant object, but one employed on a message of great importance; steady, upright, and consistent in his testimony. In this question the courage and constancy of the Baptist is applauded. By *soft raiment*, ver. 8. is meant such as is made of *silk*; and in those early ages was so scarce and valuable, that it was sold for its weight in gold. It was not to gaze at the splendid appearance of such as frequent the courts of princes, that they went into the wilderness to hear and contemplate the message of a man, plain indeed in his appearance; but who, by the austerity of his life, sanctity of his manners, and diligence in his performing the commission which he had received from above, drew the regard of the whole people. In this question, the austere mortified life of the Baptist is praised, and the spiritual nature of the Messiah's kingdom insinuated. His forerunner did not resemble any of the officers who attended the courts of earthly princes; and consequently he himself was in no respect to be like an earthly prince. See Heylin, Grotius, and Macknight.

Ver. 11. Among them that are born of women.] Our Lord honoured the Baptist with the magnificent title of one that was *more than a prophet*, (ver. 9.) for four reasons; I. He was the subject of ancient prophecies, and had long been expected by the people of God under the idea of *Elias*, a name given him by Malachi, because he was to possess the spirit and power of *Elias*: II. His conception and birth had been accompanied with miracles: III. When the season of his inspiration came, he was favoured with a clearer revelation concerning the Messiah, than had been enjoyed by many of the prophets under the law: IV. By his sermon he pre-

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pared the Jews for receiving the Gospel, and consequently began that more excellent dispensation. But though the Baptist thus excelled all the preceding prophets, the *least* inspired person in the kingdom of heaven, the least apostle or preacher of the Gospel, *was greater than he*; because, by constantly attending on Jesus, they were much better acquainted with his character, disposition, and doctrine, than the Baptist, who had seen him only transiently: wherefore, in respect of their personal knowledge of the Messiah, the apostles greatly excelled the Baptist. Further, they were employed not in making preparation for, but in erecting the Messiah's kingdom. Hence they were greater than the Baptist, in respect to the dignity of their office: Moreover, having gifts bestowed on them to fit them for that office, far superior to his, they were greater in respect of their illumination; they had the spirit so dwelling in them, that on all occasions they could declare the will of God infallibly, being as it were living oracles. To conclude, as they had been likewise the subject of ancient oracles, Acts ii. 16. they had been long expected by the people of God. See Macknight, and Sharp's second argument.

Ver. 12, 13. The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence.] *Is violently invaded.* Wat. Dr. Heylin renders it, *The kingdom of heaven is entered by force, and they who strive with all their might take it, as by violence.* The kingdom of heaven was indeed the inheritance both of Jews and Gentiles; but *the Jews esteemed all those who knew not the law accursed.* However, they neglected to accept the gracious terms of the Gospel, while the publicans and sinners, complying with these terms, entered into that inheritance, which the Jews thought they had no legal

legal claim to. Hence they are stiled *the violent*, because he who is obliged to make use of violence to secure any thing, cannot be supposed to have a legal claim to that thing. By referring to the parallel place, Luke viii. 29. the meaning of the present verses will more evidently appear: *and all the people who heard him* [i. e. John] says our Lord, *and the publicans justified God, being baptised with his baptism.* The meaning is, that while John executed his ministry, the people, particularly the publicans, justified God, by receiving his baptism; or, to express the matter differently, by believing on John, they declared the Son of God's righteousness, and vindicated the divine wisdom in sending him.

Ver. 16, 17. But whereunto shall I liken, &c.] For the better understanding of our Saviour in this place, see Luke vii. 29, 30. To shew the Pharisees more plainly the perverseness of their disposition, our Saviour told them they were like children at play, who do what their companions desire them; peevish and froward, and displeased with every thing. The mourning airs here spoken of fitly represent the severity of the Baptist's manners, and the mournful doctrine of mortification and repentance which he preached: On the other hand, the chearful airs beautifully represent our Lord's sweet disposition, affable condescension, and engaging method of giving instruction; so that every thing was tried which could possibly have influence, to bring the Jews to repentance. See Grotius, and Wetstein.

Ver. 18, 19. For John came neither eating, &c.] Our Lord justifies the application of the proverb in the preceding verse to the Pharisees, by observing that the divine wisdom had tried every method pro-

per for converting them, but in vain: For, first of all, the Baptist was sent unto them, in the stern dignity of their ancient prophets, so that it was natural to think they would have revered him; nevertheless they rejected him altogether. Such, it seems, was the pride or malice of the Pharisees, that when they found their own ostentatious and hypocritical mortifications utterly eclipsed by the real austerities of this holy man's life, they impudently affirmed, that his living in deserts, his shunning the company of men, the coarseness of his cloathing, the abstemiousness of his diet, with the other severities which he practised, were all the effects of madness, or religious melancholy: *John came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, (Luke vii. 23.) and they say he hath a devil; literally, he hath a demon.* This method of converting the Pharisees proving unsuccessful, God sent his only Son in a more familiar manner, ver. 19. Jesus did not practice those mortifications which rendered the Baptist remarkable: He fared like other men, and went into mixed companies, not avoiding the society even of publicans and sinners. But neither could they hear Him; for notwithstanding he maintained the strictest temperance himself, and never encouraged the vices of others, either by dissimulation or example, they attributed that free way of living to a certain looseness of disposition.

Ver. 20—24. Then began he to upbraid the the cities.] *Brought down to hell* is a scripture phrase used to denote an *utter destruction*, a total overthrow. See Isa. xiv. 13. 15. lvii. 9. 1 Sam. ii. 6. Dr. Heylin renders it, *shall be brought to utter destruction.* "This prophecy hath been so exactly fulfilled, says Mr. L'Enfant, in the destruction of Capernaum, that according to the re-

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lation of travellers, there are not now above eight cottages where it stood." The word *hell* *אֵדֶן*, does not signify here the *place of the damned*, but only, as we have frequently observed, the *condition and place of the dead*; the sepulchre. See Ephes. iv. 9. Instead of *but I say*, &c. ver. 24. the MS. reads *Moreover*, &c.

Ver. 25. At that time Jesus answered and said.] Because thou hast hid. God is often said in scripture to *do* those things which he determines to permit, and which he foresees will be in fact the consequence of those circumstances in which his creatures are placed, though their wills are laid under no constraint. See on Exod. ix. 34, 35. 2 Sam. xii. 11, 12. xxiv. 1. 1 Kings xxii. 22, 23. In this sense alone could God be said to *hide* those things from the learned men of that age, which he revealed so plainly, that honest and well-disposed persons, though *children in understanding*, might come to the knowledge of them. See ch. x. 34, 35. It seems they were but a few, and those generally of the lower sort of people, who embraced the doctrine of Christ, and assisted him in erecting his kingdom; circumstances which, in the eyes of common wisdom, were melancholy and mortifying; but our Lord foresaw, that by the direction of God, these very circumstances would become the noblest demonstrations of his dignity, the clearest proofs of the excellency of his religion, and the most stupendous instances of his power, who by such weak instruments established his religion in every part of the habitable world, against the policy, power, and malice of devils, and men combined to oppose him. Besides, had the great rulers and learned Scribes, the nobles, the wits and geniuses been converted, it must have been

prejudicial to the Gospel in several respects, as such converts and teachers might probably have made the Gentiles look upon it as a trick of state : Perhaps also they would have mixed it with things foreign to its nature ; our Lord, therefore wisely made the rejection of the Gospel by the great men of the nation, and the reception of it by persons in lower stations, matter of especial *thanksgiving* both now and afterwards in Judea, Luke x. 21. *Babes*, *νηπιος*, in Scripture language, are persons whose faculties are not improved by learning ; but who, to that sagacity and understanding which is purely natural, join the best dispositions of heart ; such as meekness, modesty, innocence, honesty, humility, docility, and all other engaging qualities which are to be found in children. This is plain from chap. xviii. 3. Babes therefore stand in opposition, not to men of sound judgment and reason, but to proud politicians, and men of learning, who are so full of themselves, that they disdain to receive instructions from others, and who make all their abilities subservient to their advancement in the world. See Macknight, L'Enfant, Stockius.

Ver. 28. Come unto me, &c.] Dr. Doddridge has well paraphrased it, " All ye that labour, and are heavy-burdened, whether with the distresses of life, or with the sense of guilt, (see Pf. xxxii. 4.) or with the load of ceremonial observances." It has been well observed that Christianity gives rest to the soul, because, 1st, it clearly informs the judgment concerning the most important points, removing all doubts concerning them ; because, 2dly, it settles the will in the choice of what is for its happiness ; because, 3dly, it directs the passions aright, and so keeps them under good government.

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See my sermon on this text, *Discourses on the miracles*, vol. i.

Ver. 29, 30. 'Take my yoke upon you] That Christ's yoke is *easy*, and *his burden light*, must be acknowledged, because all his affirmative precepts are as necessary to the souls of men, as food is to their bodies; and for his negative injunctions, abstinence from drink is not more expedient to persons swelled with the dropsy, than they are to all who would preserve the health and vigour of their souls. The obedience therefore which he required, is such a reasonable obedience as every well-informed mind must rejoice in; and the pleasures which he promises, are the pleasures of goodness, the most extensive, satisfying, and durable of all pleasures, being to the mind a delicious and continual feast. See Macknight and Hammond.

REFLECTIONS ON CHAP. XI.

Jesus Christ is the sole teacher of humility, ver. 29. *Learn of ME*, says the blessed Saviour, with great and peculiar propriety; for it was a lecture of philosophy until then unknown to the world. Humility was a virtue, which had not so much as a name before Christianity. But, supposing it had been known to the world before our Saviour, yet no mere mortal was fitted to teach it in perfection; and therefore it was a doctrine and a discovery reserved for, and peculiarly adapted to the character and condition of Jesus Christ; who not only humbled himself to the meanness of our nature, but vouchsafed to assume one of the lowest and most abject conditions of life, to teach us perfect *humility* in all its parts and circumstances; that *humility*,
without

without which we can find no *rest to our souls*. Pride is the source of a thousand disquietudes.

It is not sufficient to go to Christ by faith, we must *take upon us the yoke* of his law and Gospel, that we may conform our lives thereto, and study his disposition and behaviour, in order to imitate them. In the schools of the world some study philosophy, others physic, law, &c. in the school of Christ, every one must study *meekness* and *humility*; for to these two the whole science of Christianity may be reduced; *meekness* of charity, calm and sedate in the midst of wrongs, injuries, affronts, persecutions; without envy, without malice, without revenge: *Humility* of heart, remote from all inordinate and worldly desires, by which pride is nourished; ascribing nothing to itself, and desire nothing; ready to part with all things, to be placed below all men, to remain in silence and oblivion. Lord, vouchsafe to teach us this science, writing it in our hearts by thy love!

C H A P. XII.

Ver. 5. Or have ye not read in the law] He did not mean that these words were to be found in the law, but that they might read in the law, that the high-priests were obliged on the sabbath-day to perform such servile work in the temple, as, considered separately from the end of it, was a profanation of the sabbath; and yet were guiltless, because it was necessary to the public worship, on account of which the sabbath was first instituted. From Numb. xxviii. 9. it appears, that besides the continual burnt-offerings, the priests were obliged on the sabbaths to sacrifice two lambs extraordinary, by which

which their servile work was that day double of what it was on the other days of the week. This, though really no *profanation* of the sabbath, might, according to the common notion of the Jews, be so termed; and therefore, in speaking of it, our Lord calls it so. See Macknight and Calmet.

Ver. 6. But I say unto you, that in this place, &c.] “If you reply, that the priests were not culpable in those actions, because they were undertaken for the temple service,—I acknowledge it; but at the same time it should be observed, that if the temple, with its service, is of such importance as to merit a particular dispensation from the law of the sabbath, I and my disciples, whose business of promoting the salvation of men is of equal importance, may on that account, with equal reason, take the same liberty, in a case of the like necessity.”

Ver. 7. I will have mercy, &c.] *I delight in mercy* (so *ὁμιλῶ*, signifies, ch. xxvii. 43.) *more than sacrifice*; for this is the Hebrew form of comparison. See the note on ch. ix. 13. Works of mercy, acts of kindness and beneficence are essential duties, and preferable to all the ceremonial law, named here, (from its principal act,) *sacrifice*, when that comes in competition with them. As the sense of so many important scriptures depends upon it, it may be proper to observe, that according to the genius of the Hebrew language, one thing seems to be forbidden, and another commanded, when the meaning only is, that the latter is greatly to be preferred to the former. The text before us is a remarkable instance; as likewise Joel ii. 13. Matt. vi. 19, 20. John vi. 27. Luke xii. 4, 5. Col. iii. 2. And it is evident that Gen. xlv. 8. Exod. xvi. 8. John v. 30. vii. 19. and many more passages, are to

to be expounded in the same comparative sense. See Doddridge, Heylin, L'Enfant.

Ver. 10. And they asked him, &c.] That is, the Pharisees, ver. 14. who, when they saw Jesus going to perform the cure, put this question to him, *Is it lawful*, &c.? by which they declared in the strongest terms their opinion of its unlawfulness: But in so doing they had no intention to prevent the action which they knew he was resolved upon, but to render him odious to the common people; expecting that he would openly declare such things lawful, in opposition to the definitions of the doctors, who had all determined that to perform cures upon the sabbath was a violation of the holy rest: Or if he should give no answer to their question, as it implied an affirmation of the unlawfulness of what he was about to attempt, they thought it would render him inexcusable, and give the better colour to their accusation. The word *θεραπεύειν*, rendered *to heal*, is very extensive, and properly includes all the care, labour, and attendance which the case of any distempered or wounded person can require.

Ver. 15. But when Jesus knew it] *But Jesus, knowing it, withdrew.* Wat.

Ver. 16. And charged them, &c.] To what we have observed concerning the reasons why our Lord desired to conceal his mighty works, in the note on ch. viii. 4. may be added the following remarks by Mr. Locke: "This concealment of himself, says he, will seem strange in one who was come to bring light into the world, and was to suffer death for the testimony of the truth. This reservedness will be thought to look as if he had a mind to conceal himself, and not to be known to the world for the Messiah, nor to be believed as such; but we should be

be of another mind, and conclude this proceeding of his according to divine wisdom, and suited to a fuller manifestation and evidence of his being the Messiah, when we consider that he was to fill up the time foretold for his ministry; and, after a life illustrious in miracles and good works, attended with humility, meekness, patience, and suffering, and every way conformable to the prophecies of him, should be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and with all quiet submission be brought to the cross, though there was no guilt nor fault found in him. This could not have been, if, as soon as he appeared in public, and began to preach, he had presently professed himself to have been the Messiah, the king who owned that *kingdom* which he published to be at hand; for the sanhedrim would then have laid hold of it, to have got him into their power, and thereby have taken away his life; at least they would have disturbed his ministry, and hindered the work he was about. That this made him cautious, and avoid as much as he could the occasions of provoking them, and falling into their hands, is plain from John vii. 1.

Ver. 21. And in his name, &c.] St. Matthew hath here followed the lxx. In Isaiah it is, *and the isles shall wait for his law*: But the meaning of both passages is the same; for the Evangelists use the *name* of God with that latitude which it has in the Hebrew language, wherein it denotes the Deity himself, his perfections, his worship, his laws, and in one word, every thing relating to religion. In the language of the Old Testament, the *isles* commonly denote the idolatrous nations to the west of Judea. The prophet's meaning therefore is, that the heathen nations charmed with the humanity and gentleness of the Messiah's kingdom, the

the equity of his government, and the beauty and rectitude of his laws, shall trust in him, or obtain for themselves protection and safety by becoming his subjects. See Macknight and Vitringa.

Ver. 24. This fellow doth not cast out, &c.] The Pharisees affirmed that Jesus performed his miracles particularly on possessed persons by the assistance of Beelzebub, for two reasons; *first*, Jesus had all along been at great pains to oppose those superstitions which most of the teachers of that age looked upon as the essentials of religion, and extolled as principal branches of piety. Hence they took him that decreed them to be a very flagitious person; And because it is supposed, Deut. xiii. 1—3, that a false prophet might work signs and wonders, with an intention to turn men from the worship of God, They thought our Lord was a deceiver of that kind; affirming that he performed all his miracles by the assistance of evil spirits, and with a view to seduce the people from their obedience to God. *Secondly*, The demons, in addressing Jesus, honoured him with the title of the Messiah. This it is probable his enemies said, the devil would never have done, had he not been in compact with them. Hence we see the reason why our Lord, on several occasions, strictly charged the devils not to make him known: He would not have their testimony, because it was a real defamation, and because he foresaw that a bad use would have been made of it by men of evil mind. *Every kingdom*, &c. as much as to say, "If evil spirits assist me in working miracles for the confirmation of my doctrine, they do what they can to promote the spiritual worship and ardent love of the true God, and as effectually as possible excite men to the practice of universal justice, benevolence, temperance.

perance, and self-government; all these virtues being powerfully recommended by my doctrine. But thus to make the evil spirits fight against themselves, is accidentally to make them ruin their own interest, unless it can be thought that the strength and welfare of a society is advanced by jarring discord, and destructive evil wars: Your judgment therefore of my conduct is probably malicious and absurd.

Ver. 27. By whom do your children, &c.] *Your sons, viol.* Dr. Chandler paraphrases the verses thus: "You do not impute the miracles of your prophets to Beelzebub, but on the evidence of these miracles you receive them as the messengers of God; nevertheless you reject *me*, who work greater and more numerous miracles than they, and impute them to the power of evil spirits. Is this conduct of a piece? Wherefore these prophets shall be your judges; they shall condemn you." Others, however, suppose, and as it seems to me with better reason, that by *your sons* is meant *your disciples*, or *your countrymen* in general; for that many of the Jews did at this time attempt to cast out devils, is plain from Mark ix. 38. Luke ix. 49. Acts xix. 13. and Josephus Antiq. lib. viii. c. 2. Calvin thinks that God conferred a power of this kind on some particular persons amongst the Jews anciently that by thus proving his presence among them, he might retain the nation in the faith of his covenant; and that the people, having experienced God's power in those instances, came foolishly to institute for themselves the office of an exorcist. Agreeably to this it may be observed, that our Lord's argument does not require that the demons was actually expelled by those exorcists; it is sufficient that the Jews thought

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they were expelled, and did not condemn those pretended miracles, as they did Christ's real ones. See Whitby and Grotius in the place.

Ver. 31, 32. Wherefore I say, &c.] The inference is not particularly connected with the member of the discourse immediately preceding it; but it arises from the whole series of the reasoning; as if our Lord had said, "Since all these arguments make it evident that I perform my miracles by the spirit of God, you should not ascribe them to the devil; yet this blasphemy may be forgiven you, because you may repent and believe, upon receiving stronger proofs of my mission from God. When that period cometh, namely, after I am raised from the dead by the Holy Ghost, when his miraculous gifts are shed down upon believers, and the nature of the Messiah's kingdom is more fully made known, the foundation of your prejudices against me shall be wholly removed: Wherefore if you shall then speak against the Holy Ghost, by maliciously affirming that his gifts and miracles come from the devil, it shall not be forgiven you; because it is a sin which you cannot possibly repent of, in as much as further evidence shall be offered you; but you shall be punished for it in this world, and in the world to come." Or, we may translate the clause differently; "It shall not be forgiven him, neither in this age, neither in the age to come;" importing, that no expiation was provided for the blasphemy of the Spirit neither under the Jewish or Christian dispensation. St. Mark adds, ch. iii. 30. *Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit*; signifying, that our Lord declared the irremissibleness of the sin against the Holy Ghost—on this occasion, that the Pharisees might be awakened to a sense of their danger, in approaching so near as they did to that sin, when,

when, being unable to deny his miracles, they represented them as performed by the assistance of the devil. The reader desirous of seeing the above interpretation indubitably confirmed, is referred to Dr. Whitby's note, and 4th appendix to St. Matthew, and to John Hale's tracts. Archbishop Tillotson, vol. i. serm. 17. has endeavoured to prove, that the sin against the Holy Ghost was that which these Pharisees committed in ascribing the miracles of Christ to satan: And certainly, if they persisted in that blasphemy, after the full demonstration of Christ's mission, this was really to sin against the Holy Ghost. Dr. Clark's paraphrase, vol. vi. serm. 1. nearly agrees with what we have above given; but for the satisfaction of the reader on a subject of so much enquiry, we shall here subjoin it: "Since it is as evident as it is possible for any thing to be, that the works which I do are by the immediate authority of God, and by the power of the Holy Spirit; therefore, whosoever shall resist this great conviction, by so unreasonable and obstinate a degree of malice, as to ascribe these very works, these greatest and highest evidences of divine authority, to the power of the devil; to such a person God will never afford any further means of conviction; and therefore, though all other blasphemies, and all particular sins whatsoever, may be repented of and forgiven, yet he who is guilty of this total corruption of mind, this maliciously perverse and desperate rejecting of the greatest and highest conviction which God vouchsafes to afford men, shall never have granted him any further means of repentance and forgiveness. Every particular kind or sort of sin whatsoever, and all other blasphemies whatsoever, shall be forgiven men: Even he that speaks against me, (says our
P 2 Lord)

Lord) in all other respects; or calumniates me, upon any other account whatsoever, and is not at first convinced by my preaching and exhortations, may yet afterwards be convinced by the mighty works he shall see, and by the power of the Holy Ghost, and so repent and be forgiven: But he who obstinately resists even this greatest and most extraordinary method which God has thought fit to make use of for the conversion of mankind, and maliciously reviles the most evident operations of the spirit of God; such a one has no further means left, by which he might be convinced and brought to repentance, and consequently he can never be forgiven." Dr. Waterland, instead of *blasphemy* reads *reviling*; and the MS. renders the passage throughout in the potential mood, ver. 13. — *All—blasphemy may be forgiven unto men; but—against the Holy Ghost, cannot, &c. ver. 31. And whosoever, &c. it may be forgiven; but, &c. it cannot—nor in the world to come.*

Ver. 32. Whosoever speaketh a word, &c.] The prejudices which alleviated the sin of the Jews, who rejected Jesus during his life-time, and which, in the period referred to, were to be removed, arose from such causes as these: I. His parentage and place of abode: for his countrymen, being well acquainted with both, would not allow him to be the Messiah, because they imagined when the Messiah came, no man would know from whence he was, John vii. 27. II. The old prophet Elias had not appeared to usher in the Messiah, as they expected, according to the doctrine of the Scribes, Matth. xvii. 10. founded on the prophecy, Mal. iv. 5. III. Christ's mean condition of life occasioned violent prejudices against him in the minds of the Jews, who firmly believed that their Messiah would be surrounded

surrounded with all the pomp and splendor of an earthly prince, and who, in speaking of him, had been accustomed to give him the high-sounding titles of *the King of Israel*, and *Son of God*. But by our Lord's resurrection from the dead, and by the descent of the Spirit of the Apostles, the foundation of all these prejudices was fapped: Then he was demonstrated to be *the Son of God with power*, John vi. 60, 62. Then he was *exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sin*, Acts v. 31. A kingly dignity infinitely superior to all the most dazzling honours of an earthly diadem. See Macknight.

Ver. 33. Either make the tree good, &c.] "If you make my miracles *Beelzebub's*, you must make my doctrine his also: All the good I do, you must say is his work; all the exhortations by which I excite sinners to repentance, are his; the knowledge which I give you of the way of life, and the motives I offer for your encouragement to enter upon it, are his. On the other hand, if you make my doctrine God's, you must make my miracles his likewise; for men judge of the nature of an agent by the actions which he does, just as they judge of trees by the fruit they produce; for which reason you may easily know that I am not in league with Beelzebub, but that you yourselves are so." Or we may give the words another turn, thus: Since you, Pharisees, pretend to extraordinary holiness, your words and actions should be all holy; judge therefore candidly, and speak reverently of the divine dispensations; or if you will blaspheme, lay aside your pretensions to religion; for however specious these may be, your true character will be discovered by your words and actions, even as a

tree is known by its fruit. See Macknight and L'Enfant.

Ver. 34—37. O generation of vipers! &c.] The editors of the Prussian Testament have observed very well, that the LXX, whose stile the Apostles generally make use of, render the Hebrew word שֶׁקֶר *sheker*, which signifies *falsehood, reviling, calumny,—by vain, or unprofitable*. Compare the Hebrew with the LXX, Exod. v. 9. xx. 14. Deut. v. 17. Hosea xii. 1. Mic. 14. Hab. ii. 3. and see Ephes. v. 6. when the word *vain* is joined with deceit and imposture. Now it is manifest from ver. 31, 32. that our Saviour is not speaking here of *idle or impertinent*, but of *false, reviling, and blasphemous*: For this reason some MSS. read πονηρον, wicked, and thus St. Chrysostom understood it. See James i. 26. iii. 3, 10. and what I have said more on this subject, Christian's Magazine, vol. ii. p. 517.

Ver. 38, 39. Then certain of the Scribes, &c.] Though our Saviour's reasoning was clear and unanswerable, yet some of the Scribes and Pharisees, desirous to divert the discourse to another topic, and fully demonstrating the hardness of their hearts, required *a sign from heaven*; as much as to say, "Master, thou professest thyself a teacher of extraordinary authority, and we may justly expect some proportionable proof of it: Now these supposed dispositions which we have lately seen or heard of, are so liable to fraud and collusion, that we cannot fully acquiesce in them, but would gladly see a more remarkable and convincing sign from thee; and particularly some such *celestial appearance* as several of our ancient prophets gave." The words of St. Luke xi. 16. expressly fix it to this sense: And St. Matthew, in another story of this kind,

kind, ch. xvi. 1. tells us, they *demand*ed a sign from heaven. (See Mark viii. 11. the note on ch. iv. 6. and John vi. 30.) And they might probably conclude, that they had the better excuse for making such a proposal, as Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and Elijah had given such signs. Jesus told them, that their requiring a sign after so many miracles were wrought to convince them, shewed them to be a *wicked and adulterous generation*, a spurious breed, which had degenerated from the faith and piety of their great progenitor Abraham; for which reason they should have no other sign, but such as they were every day beholding in his miraculous works, the sign of the prophet Jonah accepted. He meant hereby the miracle of his own resurrection from the dead, typified by the deliverance of Jonah from the fish's belly, and to which he often appealed, as the great evidence of his mission from God. We may just observe, that as the resurrection of Christ was attended with the appearance of a descending angel, it was with greater exactness than is generally observed, the very thing that these Pharisees demanded; *a sign from heaven*. Some have objected to our Saviour as being unwilling to give all the evidence of his mission which he might have given, on account of his refusing a sign when it was demanded. But to this it may be replied, that as the persons who made this demand were actuated by no laudable motives but by perverseness and prejudice, which had already made them withstand the clearest evidence and the greatest miracles, and which it was in vain to expect to conquer by working more miracles; It was therefore as remarkable to refuse to work more, as it is not to persist in reasoning with a man, who shews that he reasons only for the
sake

fake of contention, without any concern to discover truth. But when we recollect what was the sign which they desired, the objection is even absurd. It was a sign which they were led to expect only by their false notions of a temporal Messiah; it was absolutely inconsistent with the truth of the Messiah's character: To have given it, would have been to become just such a deliverer as the Jews expected; it was therefore impossible that it could be given: Instead of giving it, it was proper to affirm expressly, as Jesus did affirm, that it never would be given; and that it did not belong to the Messiah, justly conceived. Whenever a sign was asked, he appealed for the certainty of his mission to his own resurrection from the dead. So far was he from refusing *any rational evidence of his mission*, that even their perverseness hindered him not from voluntarily pointing out the *strongest*. His resurrection was in itself the most stupendous miracle, and its force was encreased by its being in this manner appealed to; for it thus became the accomplishment of the prophecies uttered by him. But there is a farther propriety in his foretelling it, when they required a sign: It was a plain insinuation that their opinion of the manner of the Messiah's appearance was wrong; that he was not such a prince as they expected; for by it he informed them expressly, that he must be put to death before he entered on his kingdom. His answer was therefore fit for leading them to a juster interpretation of Daniel's prophecy (ch. vii. 13, 14.) and for preventing their rejection of the Messiah, because he wanted a character which was never predicted of him. See Dr. Gerard's "dissertations on subjects relating to the

the genius and evidence of Christianity," p. 186, &c. and John vi. 30.

Ver. 40. For as Jonas was three days and three nights.] See the note on Jonah i. 17. Instead of *of the whale's*, we should read *the fish's belly*. It is no where in the Old Testament said that it was a *whale*, and *κατα* signifies any *large fish* in general. See Mintert on the word. The *heart of the earth* is an Hebraism for *the earth*. See what Ezekiel says of the city of Tyre, which was situated on the sea-shore, ch. xxvii. 4. xxviii. 2. Our Saviour, in the expression here used, alludes to Jonah ii. 2. The miraculous preservation of Jonah for three days in the belly of a fish, was to the Ninevites a certain proof of his mission from God, being credibly attested to them, either by the mariners, who threw him overboard at a great distance from land; or by some other persons, who, happening to see the fish vomit him alive upon the shore, might enquire his story of him, and who, in the course of their business, met him afterwards at Nineveh, when they confirmed his preaching by relating what they had seen. In like manner Christ's resurrection from the dead, after having been three days and three nights in the heart of the earth, being credibly attested to the Jews, should clearly demonstrate that he came from God.

Ver. 43—45. When the unclean Spirit, &c.] Our Lord here finishes his defence, alluding to the occasion of the dispute, ver. 22. with a parable of a possessed person, who, having had the devil expelled out of him, received him back again, and thereby was brought into a worse condition than ever. "*When the unclean Spirit is gone out of a man, &c. i. e. when convictions are raised in the mind of a sinner, whether by God's word, or the chastise-*
ments

ments of his providence, the man forms many strong resolutions against his sins; the evil spirit thus expelled walks to and fro in desert places, seeking to seduce God's subjects from their allegiance; but meeting with little opportunity of gratifying his malicious dispositions in these solitudes, he leaves them, in hopes of getting access into his former habitation; *then he saith, I will return, &c.* That is, notwithstanding the man had so peremptorily resolved against his sins, the devil findeth him void of all his former convictions, good thoughts and resolutions, but at the same time completely furnished with his lusts and passions, and every thing that can make him a commodious habitation for an evil spirit. *Then taketh he with himself seven other spirits*; i. e. a great many; the number *seven* denoting perfection, whether of good things or bad;—and they get an easy access, and take a sevenfold stronger possession of the man than before. Even so shall it be unto this wicked generation, who resist the convictions which my doctrine and miracles have raised in them." This parable, therefore, is designed to teach men in every age, the danger of resisting their convictions and of breaking through their resolutions; the effect being commonly to render them much more obdurate and abandoned than before. See 2 Pet. ii. 20. By ἀνὺδες are meant *deserts*. See Ps. cvi. 14. LXX. and so Waterland renders it.

REFLECTIONS ON CHAP. XII.

What our Lord says upon this occasion, and chiefly the expression *I will have mercy and not sacrifice*, ver. 7. deserves our best attention. The Christian

tian religion deals not in forms and ceremonies, nay, dispenses even with rituals of divine appointment, when humanity and benevolence interfere with the observation of them. How great then the perverseness and wickedness of those, who sacrifice mercy itself, not merely to ceremonies of divine original, but to their own arbitrary inventions, superstitious dreams, and precarious, though confident determinations. We should practise habitual caution and candour, lest before we are aware we condemn the innocent and the pious, and become guilty of what is much more displeasing in the sight of God, than the faults which a peevish and censorious temper may fancy it discovers in our brethren.

There are but too many Christians, it is to be feared, who regard their *cattle* even more than the souls committed by Providence to their care, and therefore, no doubt, more than their own too. Ver. 11, 12. If we owe a great deal to a man, let him be what he will, how much more to a Christian, together with whom we help to form the body of Christ? Strange corruption of the heart of man, to whom it must be *proved*, that he is *permitted at all times to do good*?

The malice of the Pharisees did not restrain the benevolence of our compassionate Saviour, nor deprive the poor patient of his cure. ver. 13. The fear of giving offence to Pharisaical persons should never hinder an Evangelical labourer from going forward with God's work, according to his rules and maxims. We should never be *overcome of evil*.

The Spirit of Christ is not a spirit of contention, murmuring, clamour, or litigiousness: *He shall not strive nor cry!* He who loves all these, belongs not to him. The meekness of Jesus Christ, as his
Father's

Father's minister, was particularly foretold, to teach the clergy that their ministry is not a ministry of pride, impiousness, and violence; but of humility, moderation, and mildness.

CH A P. XIII.

Ver. 3. He spoke to them in parables] That parables are very familiar, and much in use among the eastern nations, and particularly those of Palestine, we learn from the concurrent evidence of all writers on the subject; and, for the most part, as Sir Isaac Newton (on *Daniel*, p. 148.) observes, "Both Christ, and his forerunner John as well as the old prophets, were wont in their parabolical discourses to allude to things present, and such as immediately offered themselves." See the note on ch. v. 1, and 14. These are some of the reasons our Saviour spoke in parables: I. As a judicial punishment upon those who were hardened against, and ill-disposed to the truth; and sometimes as a more lively method to convince and confute them, even from their own mouths: II. As a means to awaken the attention, and whet the inquiry of those who were well disposed, and to lead them to a serious examination, and diligent searching after the truth; and as a method the most natural, beautiful, and instructive, to teach from common and familiar objects, the most divine and important lessons, and to imprint them on the memory. III. As a veil to the mysteries of his kingdom, and a method less offensive to convey some very ungrateful and unpalatable truths, such particularly as the rejection of the Jews, the calling of the Gentiles, &c. IV. As a lesson of man's natural blindness and ignorance in
spiritual

spiritual matters, unless Christ, by his grace, is pleased to open the understanding, and enlighten the mind. And all this, to fulfil the prophecies concerning him, in this respect, as well as to comply with the customs and manners of the nation, with whom this method of instruction was familiar." See the preface to my sermons on the miracles and parables, p. 6.

Ver. 10, 13. And the disciples came, &c.] See the note on Mark iv. 10. The answer which our Lord here returns to his disciples, is remarkable: "You my disciples, says he, who are of an humble docile temper, and are content to use means, and to resort to me for the understanding of such things as I deliver, to *you* it shall be no disadvantage that they are clothed in parables; for, besides that I am ready to interpret every thing to you, my discourses are so ordered, as to become plain and intelligible to such unprejudiced minds: the truth will shine through the veil, and the shadow shall guide you to the body and substance. But as for those proud and self-conceited Pharisees, who are transported with their own prejudices, and will neither understand nor practise things plainly delivered, for the just hardening them, and such as they are, I deliver myself in a manner which will not readily be apprehended by men of their temper. They shall choke themselves with the *husks*, while you feed upon the *kernel*. They have brought this wilful blindness upon themselves, that *in seeing they see not*; and this wilful deafness, that *in hearing they hear not, neither understand*. This is elegantly paraphrased in the version of 1727. *They overlook what they see, and are inattentive to what they hear*: We have an expression in Juvenal parallel to the latter clause of the 12th verse.

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Nil

Nil habuit Codrus—et tamen illud
Perdidit infelix totum nil.—— Sat. iii. l. 208.

'Tis true, poor Codrus nothing had to boast,
And yet, poor Codrus all that nothing lost.

DRYDEN.

This sentence of our Lord, which hath the appearance of a paradox, is often made use of by him. *He that hath*, is, he that improveth those advantages which God had given him, and continually receives more, till he hath attained to a full measure of them : *He that hath not*, is, he that doth not improve the like advantages, but makes so ill a use of them, that they stand him in no more stead than if he had them not. *Shall be taken even that he hath*, means the talents or disadvantages, wherewith he hath been intrusted.

Ver. 14, 15. And in them is fulfilled, &c.] See the note on Isai. vi. 9. The prophet's meaning is, that the Jews should certainly hear the doctrines of the Gospel without understanding them, and see the miracles which confirmed these doctrines without perceiving the finger of God in them; not because the evidences of the Gospel, whether internal or external, were insufficient to establish it, but because the corruption of their hearts hindered them from discerning those evidences : *For this people's heart is waxed gross*, &c. In Isaiah the passage is worded somewhat differently, *Make the heart of this people fat*, &c. Now this form is peculiar to the prophetic writings, implying no more than an order to the prophet simply to foretel that the Jews would *make their own hearts hard*, sensual, proud, and stubborn; and *their ears heavy*, and *shut their eyes*, &c. They would shut their eyes against the miracles,

racles, and their ears against the doctrines of the Gospel, as if they were afraid of being converted and healed; having the strongest aversion to hear or see what was contrary to their inclination. See Jer. i. 9. Ezek. xliii. 3. Gen. xli. 13. This prophecy, therefore, and its citation, are exactly the same; only the prophecy represents the thing as to happen,—*Make the heart of this people, &c.* whereas the citation represents it as already come to pass,—*This people's heart is, &c.* “This people have made themselves so wicked and proud, that they will neither hear nor see any thing opposite to their lusts; so that they appear as if they were resolved not to be converted.” This interpretation of the prophecy, and of its application made by St. Matthew, is confirmed by Isaiah himself, ch. vi. 11. *Then said I, Lord, how long? How long are they to be in this miserable condition? And he answered, till the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate; their blindness is to remain, till utter destruction falls upon them as a nation, overturning the constitution of their church and state.”* It is confirmed also by the subjects of the parables to which our Lord applied this prophecy: For, had he told the Jews plainly, what he told them in an obscure manner by the parable of the *sower*, namely, that a principal part of the Messiah's office was to instil the doctrines of true religion into the minds of men, and that the chief effect of his power on earth should be to set them free from the tyranny of their lusts, that they might become fruitful in goodness; Had he plainly declared what he insinuated in the parable of the *grain of mustard*, which grew so great, as to shelter the fowls of heaven under its branches,—that the Gentiles were to be governed by the Messiah, not

as slaves, but free-born subjects, and to enjoy all the privileges of his kingdom on an equal footing with the Jews; Had he taught them plainly, what he insinuated obscurely, by the parable of the *sown seed*, which sprang up silently, and by the parable of the *leaven* hid in a quantity of meal, that the kingdom of the Messiah was neither to be erected nor supported by the violence of war, but by the secret force of truth, whose operation, though strong, is altogether imperceptible;—I say, had our Lord taught his hearers these things in plain terms, they would have rejected them, been greatly offended, and probably have forsaken them altogether. So opposite were the doctrines mentioned to their favourite notions and expectations. In the mean time, if it be asked why he handled such subjects at all, since he delivered them in terms so obscure? The answer is, it was expedient for the confirmation of the Gospel, that he himself, in his own life-time, should give some hints of the nature of it, and of the reception it was to meet with; because the Jews, comparing the events with these parabolical predictions, would be disposed thereby to acquiesce more peaceably in the admission of the Gentiles into the church, without subjecting them to the Mosaical institutions; a thing they were not brought to do with the utmost difficulty. See Macknight, and more in the note on Mark iv. 11. Dr. Doddridge renders these verses, *And in them is the prophecy of Isaiah fulfilled, which saith, By hearing you shall hear, but you shall not understand, and seeing you shall see, but shall not perceive. For the heart of this people is grown stiff with fatness, and they hear with heavy ears, and draw up their eyes, [as if they were more than half asleep] lest at any time they should see, &c.* The MS. before me reads, ver.

14. *By hearing ye will hear, and will not understand, —will see, and will not perceive: Ver. 15. Lest— they might see—might understand—might be converted.*

Ver. 17. *Verily, I say unto you, that, &c.] This is what sets the disciples above all prophets, and renders them greatest in the kingdom of heaven. See ch. ix. 11. and comp. Ps. cxix. 174. Luke ii. 25, 29, 30. x. 23, 24. John viii. 56. 1 Pet. i. 10, 12.*

Ver. 19. *When any one heareth, &c.] From this interpretation of the parable by our Saviour, we learn, that the seed signifies the doctrines of true religion; and the various kind of ground, the various kinds of hearers: The comparison between the Deity and the sower, is frequent amongst the Jewish writers, and seed is among almost all nations used for doctrine or instruction. The ground by the high-way side, which is apt to be beaten by men's treading upon it, is an image of those who have their hearts so hardened with impiety, that though they hear the Gospel preached, it makes no impression at all upon them; because they either hear it inattentively, or if they attend, they quickly forget it. This insensibility and inattention is strongly represented by the beaten ground along the highway, into which the seed never entering, it is bruised by the feet of men, or picked up of birds. When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, or Gospel, and understandeth, or considereth it not, (for *consider* signifies both) then cometh the wicked one, &c. The devil is said to come and catch the word from this sort of hearers, not because he has power to rob men of their knowledge, or religious impressions, by any immediate act; but because they expose themselves, through carelessness, to the whole force of the temptations which he lays in*
Q 3 *their*

their way, and particularly to those which arise whether from the commerce of men, (a circumstance observed by St. Luke, who tells us that the seed was trodden down) or from their own headstrong lusts, which, like so many hungry fowls fly to, and quickly eat up the word out of their mind. The perturbation occasioned by the passions of this kind of hearers, and by the temptations which they are exposed to, renders them altogether inattentive in hearing; or if they attend, it hardens them against the impression of the word, and effaces the remembrance of it in an instant; insomuch, that the pernicious influence of evil passions and bad company cannot truly be represented by any lower figure, than that *the word is taken away by the devil*, whose agents such persons and lusts most certainly are. See Macknight, and my sermons on this parable. Dr. Waterland reads the last clause, *This is it which is sown by the way-side*.

Ver. 20, 21. But he that received—into stony places] The *stony*, or rocky ground, represents those hearers, who, so far receive the word into their hearts, that it springs up in good resolutions, which perhaps are accompanied with a partial reformation of some sins, and a temporary practice of some virtues. Nevertheless, they are not thoroughly affected with the word; it does not sink deep enough to remain in their minds; and therefore, when persecution arises for the sake of the Gospel, and such hearers are exposed to fines, imprisonments, corporal punishments, banishment, and death, or even to any great temptation of an ordinary kind, which requires firmness to repel it, those good resolutions, which the warmth of the passions had raised so quickly in hearing, do as quickly wither, because they are not rooted in just apprehensions of the reasons

reasons which should induce men to lead such lives ; just like vegetables, which not having depth of soil sufficient to nourish them, are soon burnt up by the scorching heat of the mid-day sun.

Ver. 22. He also that received seed among the thorns] The ground full of thorns, which sprang up with the seed and choaked it, represents all those who receive the word into hearts full of worldly cares ; which sooner or later destroy whatever convictions or good resolutions are raised by the word. Worldly cares are compared to thorns, not only because of their efficacy in choaking the word, but because it is with great pains and difficulty that they are eradicated. In the parable the hearers of this determination are distinguished from those who receive the seed on stony ground, not so much by the effect of the word upon their minds, as by the different nature of each ; for in both the seed sprang up, but brought forth no fruit. The *stony ground* hearers are incapable of retaining the impressions made by the word ; they have no root in themselves ; no strength of mind ; no firmness of resolution, to resist temptations from without. Whereas the *thorny ground* hearers have the soil, but then it is filled with the cares of the world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the love of pleasure, which sooner or later stifle the impressions of the word ; and by this means, in the issue, they are as unfruitful as the former. But both are distinguished from the *way-side* hearers by this, that they receive the word, and yield to its influences in some degree ; whereas the others do not receive the word at all, hearing without attention ; or, if they do attend, forgetting it immediately. The *way-side* hearers hold the first place in the parable, because they are by far more numerous than the rest ; and the *good ground* hearers

hearers the last, because they are but few in number. The phrase ἀπατη τῷ πλούτῳ, the *deceitfulness of riches*, is very elegant, and admirably expresses the various artifices by which people, in the pursuit of riches, excuse themselves from day to day, putting off religious cares,—and the confounding disappointment which often mingles itself with their labours, and even with their success. Comp. Prov. xi. 28. Luke xviii. 24. 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10, 17. 2 Tim. ii. 4. iv. 10.

Ver. 23. But he that received seed into the good ground] St. Luke hath expressed this rather more fully, ch. viii. 15. *But that on the good ground are they, who, in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it,—in opposition to the way-side, which never received the seed at all, but bearing it on its surface, offered it to the devouring birds; and bring forth fruit with patience; in opposition both to the stoney and thorny grounds, which nourished the seed that was cast into them only for a while; the former till the sun arose, the latter till the thorns sprang up. The goodness of heart for which this kind of hearers are applauded, consists in their capacity; which, having been duly cultivated by them, they understand what they hear. The honesty of their heart consists in their disposition to believe the truth, though contrary to their prejudices, and to practise it, though opposite to their inclinations: All who hear the word with these qualifications, and join thereto firmness of resolution, and the government of their passions, never fail to bring forth some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty; fruits of righteousness, in proportion to the different degrees of strength in which they possess the graces necessary to the profitable hearing of the word. See* Macknight,

Macknight, and Bp. Beveredge's 9th sermon, vol. x. 8vo.

Ver. 24—25. The kingdom of Heaven is likened, &c.] The kingdom of heaven may be compared to, &c. or, literally is like to : It is a phrase often used by our Lord, to signify that the following parable, in its principal circumstances, bears a resemblance to what comes to pass in the kingdom of heaven, i. e. the evangelical dispensation. See ch. xi. 16. and Luke vii. 32. Respecting the *Tares*, see the note on ver. 30. The great and judicious Bp. Sherlock had admirably illustrated this parable. Take away the dress of parable, says he, and what our Saviour here delivers amounts to this : "There will always be a mixture in the world of good and bad men, which no care or diligence can prevent ; and though men may and will judge that the wicked ought immediately to be cut off by the hand of God, yet God judges otherwise, and delays his vengeance for wise and just reasons, sparing the wicked at present, for the sake of the righteous ; reserving all to the great day in which the divine justice shall be fully displayed, and every man shall receive according to his own good works." The view of this parable has, in some parts of it, I think been misapplied. It is intended to represent the necessary condition of mankind, some being good, some bad ; a mixture, which from the very nature of mankind is always to be expected ;—and to justify God in delaying the punishment of those sins which all the world think are ripe for vengeance. One main view of the parable is to correct the zeal of those who cannot see the iniquity of the world without great indignation ; and not being able to stop or to correct it themselves, are apt to call upon God to vindicate his own cause, by taking

taking the matter to himself, and punishing the evil-doers. The men who have this zeal and warmth against iniquity, are not commonly the idle and negligent rulers; nor can we suppose that our Saviour would paint the same men in such different colours in the compass of a short parable; representing them idle and careless at the 25th verse, active and zealous at the 28th. Besides, as was observed before, to charge the wickedness of the world upon the negligence of this or that part of men, answers no purpose of the parable, which is, to justify the wisdom of Providence, in permitting the sins of men to go unpunished for the present. But the justification does not arise from considering the causes of iniquity, but from considering the effects which immediate punishment would have. In the other way, now explained to you, this circumstance, that *while men sleep the tares are sown*, promotes the main end of the parable, and completes the justification of the Providence of God; for this shews, that *offences must needs come*: They are not to be prevented, without disturbing the very course of nature; without God's interposing miraculously to suspend the working of second causes, since all care exercised in an human way is too little; for even when men sleep,—and sleep they must—the *enemy will sow his tares*. Since therefore the parable shews that iniquity can neither be prevented, nor immediately punished, consistently with the Wisdom and Goodness of God; it shuts out every complaint and forces us to acknowledge that God is just in all his ways, and righteous in all his dealings with mankind. See his discourses, vol. iii. disc. 8. part 1.

Ver. 29. But he said, nay, &c.] These words account for the justice of God in suspending his judgments.

judgments. To see the full force of the reason in this respect, it is necessary we should understand what sort of sinners are spoken of, for this reason is not always applicable to all cases; many sinners are spared upon other accounts than this which is here given: The sinners intended in this passage are spared merely on account of the righteous, that they may not be involved in the punishment due to the sins of others; but some sinners are spared out of a mercy which regards themselves, in hopes of their amendment. The sinners represented by the *tares* are such, of whose repentance and amendment there is no hope; for *tares*, let them grow ever so long, will still be *tares*, they can never turn to wheat. And our Saviour has told us, that these sinners shall certainly be punished at the last; which cannot certainly be said of any but incorrigible sinners: These sinners, therefore, being considered as incorrigible, there was no room to justify the delay of punishment from any circumstances arising out of their own case. Even the mercy of God was excluded in this respect; for if the incorrigible sinner be the object of mercy, no sinner need fear punishment. Our Saviour, therefore, gives them up intirely, and justifies the wisdom and goodness of God in sparing them, from other motives. The interests of good and bad men are so united in this world; there is such a connection between them in many respects, that no signal calamity can befall the wicked, but the righteous must have his share in it. This was Abraham's plea when he interceded with the Lord for the men of Sodom. In public calamities it is evident that all must be sufferers without distinction: Fire and sword, famine and pestilence, rage indifferently in the borders of the righteous and the sinner, and sweep away one as well

well as the other. Thus far then the reason of this verse most certainly extends, and shews us the mercy of God, in forbearing to appear against sinners in such punishments as would bring upon the best of men the punishments due only to the worst. You see a great wicked man in a prosperous condition, and you think his happy tranquility a perpetual reproach to the providence of God: You would not have God rain fire and brimstone upon the city for the sake of this great offender, since many innocent persons would necessarily suffer in the ruin? No, but you would have God take him suddenly away by some secret and silent method; or you would have him punished in his fortune, and reduced to that punishment which his sins deserve. This you think would be very just and reasonable, and highly becoming the wisdom of God. But do you not consider, that there is no great man who is not related to others? are all the relations and dependants of this great sinner as wicked as himself? Is there not one good man the better for him? Are his children all reprobates? Or would you turn out a family of innocent children to seek their bread in the streets, rather than let the iniquity of the father go unpunished for a few years! Till you can answer these questions, you must not pretend to arraign the wisdom and goodness of God, in sparing this offender. Now these considerations plainly shew the equity and goodness of God, in delaying the punishment of the wicked; in both the cases above-mentioned you see mercy triumphs over justice, and the guilt is preserved for the sake of the innocent, which is such an act of goodness, as no man surely has reason to complain of. Nor will the *justice* of God suffer on this account, as will plainly appear from the following considerations: The parable is
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evidently intended as an answer to the common objection against Providence, drawn from the prosperity of sinners, or the impunity of offenders. Our Lord shews in this parable, that the immediate punishment of the wicked would quite destroy these ends of justice; for the righteous and the wicked, like the wheat and the tares growing together in one field, are so mixed and united in interests in this world, that as they stand, the wicked cannot be rooted out, but the righteous must suffer with them: Consequently, the immediate destruction of the wicked, since it must inevitably fall upon the righteous also, would make no proper distinction between the good and the bad; could be no encouragement to virtue, for the virtuous would suffer; could be no discouragement to vice, for vice would fare as well as virtue: And therefore it is not only reasonable to delay the punishment of the wicked, but even necessary, to the obtaining the ends of justice since they cannot be obtained in their immediate destruction. See Bp. Sherlock's 8th discourse, part 1. and 2, vol. iii.

Ver. 51, 52. Have ye understood, &c.] Dr. Clarke, in his sermons, vol. x. serm. 4. gives the following exposition of the 52d verse: "Those thoroughly qualified to be successful preachers of the Gospel, should be able on all occasions to bring forth out of their memory, as out of a copious storehouse, instructions suited to persons of all capacities." Concerning the word *treasures*, see the note on ch. ii. 11.

Ver. 54. Into his own country.] *Nazareth* is so called, because it was the town in which Jesus was brought up, and to distinguish it from Capernaum, where he commonly resided. *This wisdom* signifies *this learning*. They were amazed to find in Jesus Christ such extraordinary learning, without having

ever been taught by their doctors. *These mighty works*, in the Greek is *δυναμεις*, *virtues*. The word denotes both *miracles*, and *power* of performing them.

Ver. 55. *Is not this the carpenter's son?*] In St. Mark, ch. vi. 3. it is, *Is not this the carpenter?* Ὁ τέκτων. Accordingly Justin Martyr tells us, and the ancient Christians were all of the same opinion, that Jesus was employed in this occupation. Their canons required all parents should teach their children some trade; and probably the poverty of the family engaged Christ, while he was at home with Joseph, to work at his. What an additional proof this of the humiliation of the blessed Redeemer for our sakes!

Ver. 58. *And he did not, &c.*] We are not to understand these words as if the power of Christ was here disarmed; but only that they brought but *few sick people* to him for a cure, Mark vi. 5. He did not judge it convenient to obtrude his miracles upon them, and so could not honourably and properly perform them. On the same principle it is that *faith*, in some cases, though not in all, is made the condition of receiving a cure. Compare ch. ix. 29. Mark ix. 23. and Acts xiv. 9. Christ saw proper to make it so here, as he well might, considering what the Nazarenes must undoubtedly have heard of him from other places, and what they had themselves confessed but just before, of *mighty works* being wrought by his hand; which shews indeed that their unbelief did not so much consist in a doubt of his miraculous power, as of his divine mission, which to any unprejudiced person's mind that power so abundantly proved. In this view therefore it is hard to say, how he could with honour have lavished away his favours on so unworthy

unworthy a people. Dr. Clarke explains this, "He could not do any mighty works there, consistently with his rule and method of acting, or with his present purposes and designs." See vol. ix. ferm. 3. the note on Mark vi. 6. Doddridge and Olearius. The reason, says one, why many *mighty works* are not wrought now is, not that the faith is every where planted, but that unbelief every where prevails.

CHAP. XIV.

Ver. 1. Herod the Tetrarch.] Herod is called *Tetrarch*, because he inherited but a *fourth* part of his father's dominions. However, he exercised the regal authority in Galilee, and is stiled a *king*, ver. 9. and Mark vi. 14. This was Herod Antipas. See ch. ii. 1.

Ver. 2. This is John the Baptist.] From Luke ix. 7. we learn, that Herod and his courtiers were strangely perplexed respecting the fame of Jesus, which occasioned many speculations amongst them. Some supposed that it was John risen from the dead, others that it was Elias, and others one of the old prophets; but Herod declared it to be his opinion that it was John, and *therefore*, says he, mighty works do shew forth themselves in him, i. e. *extraordinary* and *miraculous powers* were exerted by him. Erasmus indeed thinks, that as Herod was of the sect of Sadducees, who denied the immortality of the soul, (compare ch. xvi. 6. Mark viii. 14.) he might say this by way of irony to his servants, ridiculing the notions of the vulgar, and those who joined in that opinion; And this solution might have passed, had not Herod been *perplexed* on this occasion, Luke vii. The

image of the Baptist, whom he wrongfully put to death, presented itself often to his thoughts, and tormented him; therefore, when it was reported that he was risen from the dead, and was working miracles, Herod, fearing some punishment would be inflicted on him for his crime, in the confusion of his thoughts said, that John was risen from the dead, notwithstanding he was a Sadducee. Nay, he might say this, although he had heard of Jesus and his miracles before, there being nothing more common than for persons in vehement perturbations to talk inconsistently. Besides, it is no easy matter to arrive at a steady belief of so great an absurdity as the annihilation of the human mind. The being of a God, the immortality of the soul, the rewards and punishments of a future state, with the other great principles of maternal religion, often obtrude themselves upon unbelievers, in spite of all their efforts to banish them; and leave a sting behind them in the conscience, whose pain, however it may be concealed, cannot easily be allayed. Of this Herod is a remarkable example; for notwithstanding he was a king, his conscience made itself heard and felt, amidst all the noise, the hurry, the flatteries, and the debaucheries of a court.

Ver. 3. For Herod had laid hold on John.] Here is a digression in the history, from this to the 13th verse, in which the Evangelist gives us an account of the Baptist's death, though he does not tell us precisely when it happened. St. Mark indeed seems to assign it as the cause of the Apostle's return from the circuit; and St. Matthew and St. Luke mention it as the reason why Jesus retired with them to the desert of Bethsaida. It is therefore probable that John was put to death while the

the Apostles were first abroad, perhaps not long before Jesus became the subject of conversation at court: Hence, because he was but lately dead, the vulgar, the courtiers, and even Herod himself, believed that he was risen, when they heard the fame of Christ's miracles. In some of his private conferences with the king, the Baptist had been so bold as to reprove him for his adultery with Herodias. This princess was grand-daughter to Herod the Great, by his son Aristobulus, and had formerly been married to her uncle, Herod-Philip, the son of her grand-father by Mariamne. Some time after that marriage, this Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee, and son of Herod the Great by Malthace, happening, in his way to Rome, to lodge at his brother's house, fell passionately in love with Herodias, and on his return made offers to her; she accepted his addresses, deserting her husband, who was only a private person, (Philip, Tetrarch of Iturea, mentioned Luke iii. 1. being a different person from this Philip) that she might share with the Tetrarch in the honours of a crown. On the other hand, to make way for her, he divorced his wife, the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia. As Antipas was Herod the Great's son, he was brother to Herod Philip the husband of Herodias, and uncle to Herodias herself; wherefore both parties being guilty of incest as well as adultery, they deserved the rebuke which the Baptist gave them, with a courage highly becoming the messenger of God: for though he had experienced the advantage of the Tetrarch's friendship he was not afraid to displease him when his duty required it. Herod had with great pleasure heard John's discourses, and by his persuasion had done many good actions; Mark vi. 29. but now that

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he was touched to the quick, he resented it to such a degree, that he laid his monitor in irons. Thus it happens sometimes, that they who do not fear God sincerely, will go certain lengths in the obedience of his commandments, provided something is remitted to them by way of indulgence; but when they are more straitly pressed, throwing off the yoke, they not only become obstinate, but furious; which shews that no man has any reason of self-complacency because he obeys many of the divine laws, unless he has learned to subject himself to God in every respect, and without exception. Josephus asserts another reason for the apprehension of John; namely, his excessive popularity. See his *Antiq.* lxxviii. c. 5. Macknight, and Jortin.

Ver. 4. For John said unto him, &c.] Possessed of great credit with Herod and with the people, it is not possible to suppose that the Baptist would have incurred Herod's jealousy and displeasure, had he been an impostor, and an associate of a pretended Messiah,—for fear of blasting at once all their preconcerted designs. Certainly, he would now more than ever, have employed all his art to keep the influence he had acquired with the King and the people. But how opposite to all this was his conduct: At this critical point of time, in this peculiar situation, when both his own and his confederate's interest absolutely required him to act in the manner just mentioned, He even proceeded to reprove Herod himself for the wickedness of his life. An impostor, in John's particular situation, could not but have reflected, at the first thought of so dangerous a step as that which occasioned his death, that it was not his own immediate assistance only of which his associate would be deprived by his destruction,—

struction,—though this alone would have been sufficient to prevent him from adopting it; but he would besides have considered, that his own imprisonment and death would probably strike such a panick into the people, however zealous they had before been in his favour, as would restrain them from listening afterwards to Jesus, or paying the same regard they might otherwise have done to his pretensions: Nay, nothing was more probable, than that John's public ministry being put to so ignominious an end, would ever destroy that good opinion of John himself, which they had hitherto entertained, and induced them to believe, that notwithstanding his fair outside, he could be no better than an impostor. For by what arguments could John think it possible, that the Jews would persuade themselves that he was really sent to be the divine forerunner of this triumphant Messiah, when they should have seen him seized by Herod's order, imprisoned, and put to death? Besides, therefore, John's regard to his own success, his liberty and even his life itself, which no impostor can be thought desirous of exposing to certain destruction for no reason, his connection with Jesus, if they were deceivers, and the necessary dependance of both upon the mutual success and assistance of each other, must unquestionably have restrained John from provoking at this time the inveterate hatred of Herodias, and drawing on himself Herod's violent suspicion and displeasure. So that the remarkable behaviour of John, in this important particular, and at so critical a conjecture, affords us one of the strongest presumptive proofs imaginable, that neither he nor Jesus could possibly be deceivers. See on Mark i. 14. and Bell's Inquiry, p. 384.

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Ver. 6. But when Herod's birth-day was kept.] And when a convenient day [*ἐὐκαιρὸν, a favourable opportunity,*] was come that Herod, &c. for, as he mentioned the attempts which Herodias had made without success, to destroy the Baptist,—by calling this a *convenient day*, on account of the feast, he insinuates that she thought the entertainment afforded a favourable opportunity to take away the Baptist's life; consequently he directs us to consider all the favourable transactions of the birth-day, which have any reference to the Baptist's death, as the effects of Herodias's contrivance. Besides, a previous agreement between the mother and the daughter must be admitted, in order to account for the latter's dancing before the company on the birth-day: The reason is, in ancient times it was so far from being the custom for ladies of distinction to dance in public, that it was reckoned indecent if they were so much as present at public entertainments: We need refer only to the instance of Queen Vashti, who thought it so dishonourable, that rather than submit to it, even when commanded by Ahasuerus, she forfeited her crown. We may likewise remark, that notwithstanding Herodias was a lady of no distinguished character for virtue, she had such a regard to decency and reputation, that she did not appear at the birth-day feast. We may therefore believe, that it was an extraordinary thing for young ladies of quality to dance before large companies of men at public entertainments; and if so, the reader must be sensible, that this dance of Herodias's daughter could not happen by accident, but must have been brought about by some contrivance or another. See Calmet, Macknight, and Lardner's *Credibility*, part i. vol. i. p. 23.

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Ver. 11. And his head was brought in a Charger] St. Jerome tells us, that Herodias treated the head in a very disdainful manner, pulling out the tongue which she imagined had injured her, and piercing it with a needle. Thus they gratified themselves in the indulgence of their lusts, and triumphed in the murder of this holy prophet, till the righteous judgment of God overtook them all: For Providence interested itself very remarkably in the revenge of this murder on all concerned; for Herod's army was defeated in a war, occasioned by marrying Herodias; (see the last note) and both he and Herodias, whose ambition occasioned his ruin, were afterwards driven from their kingdom in great regret, and died in banishment at Lyons in Gaul; and if any credit may be given to Nicephorus, Salome,—who was afterwards infamous for a life suitable to this beginning,—fell into the ice, as she was walking over it, which closing suddenly, cut off her head. See Whitby, Doddridge, and Univ. History, vol. x. p. 632, 8vo.

Ver. 22. Jesus constrained his disciples] We learn from John vi. 15. that in consequence of this great miracle, the *people were desirous to take him by force, and make him a king*; but Jesus knowing both the purposes of the multitude, and the inclination of the disciples, which most probably led them to encourage those purposes, he ordered the latter to get into their boat, and to go before him to the other side of the creek, to the city of Bethsaida, while he should dismiss the former. The disciples therefore, express great unwillingness to depart. They could not go till He *constrained* or *obliged* them to depart. It seems they would gladly have detained the people, with whom they fully agreed in sentiment; for it was their opinion also, that He
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who could feed such a number with so little; had no reason to conceal himself; but without running the least risque might take the title of Messiah whenever he pleased. Besides, they certainly supposed that the favourable moment was come, the people being in so proper a temper, that if Jesus but spake the word, they would all to a man have lifted under him, and formed an army immediately. See Macknight and Dodderidge.

Ver. 28—30. And Peter answered him, &c.] St. Peter, a man of a warm and forward temper, looking at Jesus walking upon the sea, was exceedingly struck with it, and conceived a mighty desire of being enabled to do the like; wherefore, without weighing the matter, he immediately begged that Jesus would bid him come to him on the water. He did not doubt that his master would gratify him, as he thought he paid him a compliment, his request insinuating, that he would undertake any thing, however difficult at Christ's command. There was no height of obedience to which Peter would not soar. That this was the true language of his actions may be gathered from the circumstances before us; It would have been perfectly ridiculous in the Apostles to have asked such a proof of the person's being Jesus who spoke to him, as, had it failed, it would have become fatal to himself. No man in his senses, can be supposed to have desired a proof of that kind; Peter's request therefore should have been translated, *Lord, seeing it is thou, command me*, &c. the particle *εἰ* being here put for *enī*, see Acts iv. 9, 11, 17, in the Greek. To shew Peter the weakness of his faith, and to bear down that high opinion which he seems to have entertained of himself, as well as to demonstrate the greatness of his own power, Jesus granted his request:

quest : For in supporting him on the water, together with himself, Jesus appeared greater than in walking thereon singly. Besides it might be designed to obviate the conceit of those ancient heretics, who from this passage of the Sacred History pretended to prove, that our Lord did not assume a real human body, but only the appearance of one. Peter being thus permitted to walk upon the sea, it flattered his vanity not a little, when, descending from the vessel, he found the water firm under his feet. Hence at the first he walked towards his master with abundance of confidence ; the wind becoming more boisterous than before, made a dreadful noise, and the sea raging at the same time, shook him in such a manner, that he was on the point of being overturned : His courage staggered ; in the hurry of his thoughts he forgot that Jesus was at hand, and fell into a panic ; and now the secret power of God, which, while Peter entertained no doubt, had made the sea firm under him, began to withdraw itself : In proportion as his faith decreased, the water yielded, and he sunk. In this extremity he looked round for Christ, and upon the very brink of being swallowed up, cried out, in a great consternation of spirit, *Lord save me !* Peter probably could swim, as most fishermen can, compare John xxi. 7. and perhaps he might venture on the attempt which he now made with some secret dependance on his art, which God, for wise reasons, suffered to fail him. The verb *καταποντισσῶμαι*, rendered *to sink*, is very expressive, and may intimate, that he felt himself sinking with such a weight, that he had no hope of recovering himself, and expected nothing but that he should go directly to the bottom of the sea. See Macknight, Doddridge, Mintert, and the note on ch. xviii. 6.

Ver.

Ver. 35, 36. And when, &c.] *And the men—knowing him, sent out, &c.* Wat. and MS. Jesus ordinarily resided in the neighbourhood of Capernaum; but he had been long absent, namely, ever since his mother had taken him with her to Nazareth; see ch. xiii. 54. and Mark vi. 6. wherefore the inhabitants, glad of this new opportunity came with their sick in such crowds, that it was impossible for Jesus to bestow particular attention on each of them; which, when the sick observed, *they besought him, that they might only touch the hem, the border, or fringe of his garment, when as many as touched it were made perfectly whole,* and that whether they were good or bad people; not because there was any virtue in his garments, otherwise the soldiers who obtained them at his crucifixion might have wrought miracles, but because Jesus willed it to be so; for it was now the *acceptable time, the day of salvation,* foretold by Isai. xliii. 8. and Christ's volition was sufficient to remove any distemper whatever. This pitch of faith seems to have been wrought in the sick multitude by the instance of her who had lately been cured of a flux of blood at Capernaum, upon touching the hem of our Lord's garment. See Luke viii. 43. Macknight and Chemnitz.

REFLECTIONS ON CHAP. XIV.

Men of flagitious lives are and ever must be, subject to great uneasiness: Whatever calm and repose of mind they may seem for a season to enjoy, yet anon, a quick and pungent sense of guilt, awakened by some accident, arises like a whirlwind, ruffles and disquiets them throughout, and turns up to open view from the very bottom of their consciences

consciences all the filth and impurity which had settled itself there : Of this truth, there is not perhaps in the whole book of God, a more apt and lively instance than that of Herod in the chapter before us, ver. 1, 2.

The crying guilt of John the Baptist's blood sat but ill, no doubt, on the conscience of Herod, from the moment of his spilling it. However, his inward anguish and remorse were stifled and kept under for a time by a splendor and luxury in which he lived, till he *heard of the fame of Jesus* ; and then his heart smote him, at the remembrance of the inhuman treatment he had given to such another just and good man ; and wrung from him a confession of what he felt, by what he uttered on that occasion. *He said—this is John, &c.* There could not be a wilder imagination than this, or which more betrayed the agony and confusion of thought under which he laboured. He had often heard John the Baptist preach, and must have known that the drift of all his sermons was to prepare the Jews for the reception of a *Prophet mightier than him* and *whose shoes he was not worthy to bear*. And yet no sooner does the *Prophet* arrive, but Herod's frightened conscience gives him no leisure to recollect what *his messenger* had said ; and immediately suggests to him, that this was the murdered Baptist himself.

Herod though circumcised, appears to have been little better than a *heathen* in his principles and practices ; or, if sincerely a Jew, at most only of the sect of *Sadducees who said there was no resurrection* ; and yet under the present pangs and terrors of his guilt, he imagines that *John was risen from the dead*, on purpose to reprove him.

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It was the Baptist's distinguishing character, that *he did no miracles*, (John x. 41.) nor pretended to the power of doing them; and yet, even from hence the disturbed mind of Herod concludes that it must be he, *because mighty works did shew forth themselves in him*. And so great was his consternation and surprise that it broke out before those who should least have been witnesses of it: For he whippers not his guilty fears to a bosom friend, to the partner of his crime, and of his bed: but forgets his high state and character, and declares them to his very *servants*. Surely nothing can be more just and apposite than the allusion of the prophet, in respect to this wicked Tetrarch: He is *like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt*, Isai. lvii. 20. And such is every one, who sins with an high hand, against the clear light of his conscience: Although he may resist the checks of it at first, yet he will be sure to feel the lashes and reproaches of it afterwards. The avenging principle within us will certainly do *its* duty, upon any eminent breach of *ours*; and make every flagrant act of wickedness, even in this life, a punishment to itself. See Bp. Atterbury's sermons, vol. iv. p. 96. and the *Reflections* on Mark vi.

When the day had been thus employed in *healing and feeding* the people, Christ *retired to a mountain to pray*; ver. 23. Thus must secret devotion attend our public labours, for the instruction and salvation of men, we would secure that divine blessing, without which, neither the most eloquent preaching, nor the most engaging and benevolent conduct, can command or promise success. The proper dispositions and circumstances for praying well, are *retirement from the world, elevation of heart, solitude, and the silence and quiet of the night*.

CHAP XV.

Ver. 1, 2. Then came to Jesus, &c.] The law of Moses required external cleanness as a part of Religion: not however for its own sake, but to signify with what carefulness God's servants should purify their minds from moral pollutions: accordingly these duties were prescribed by Moses with such moderation, as was fitted to promote the end of them; but in process of time they came to be multiplied prodigiously: for the ancient doctors, to secure the observation of those precepts which were really of divine institution, added many commandments of their own, as fences to the former; and the people, to shew their zeal, obeyed them. The Pharisees were very zealous in these trifles, and from this source came that endless variety of purifications not prescribed by the law, but ordained by the elders; such as the *washing of cups and pots, brazen vessels and tables*, Mark vii. 4. not because they were dirty, but from a principle of religion, or rather of superstition. These ordinances, though they were of human invention, came at length to be looked upon as essential in religion; nay, were exalted to such a pitch, that, in comparison of them, the law of God was suffered to lie neglected and forgotten; insomuch that in some of the Jewish writings we find these blasphemous maxims: "The words of the Scribes are more lovely than the words of the law; the words of the ancients are more weighty than those of the prophets." See L'Enfant and Wetstein.

Ver. 3—6. But he answered, &c.] It was easy for our Lord to retort upon the Pharisees the charge of impiety which they had brought against his

disciples, being themselves guilty of the grossest violations of the divine law, through the regard which they shewed to their own traditions. Accordingly he produces an instance of an atrocious kind : God, saith he, has commanded children to honour their parents ;” i. e. among other things, to maintain them when reduced ; for as the greater includes the less ; so *honour*, ver. 4. imports assistance and maintenance when they are wanted, as appears from ver. 5. And *honour* is used for *maintenance*, 1 Tim. v. 17. and elsewhere.—“ Nevertheless, says our Lord, you Pharisees presumptuously make light of the divine commandment, and of the awful sanction annexed ; affirming, that it is a more sacred duty to enrich the temple than to nourish one’s parents, though they be in the utmost necessity ; and pretending that what is offered to the Great Parent is better bestowed, than that which is given for the support of our parents on earth, as if the interest of God was different from that of his creatures. Nay, ye impiously teach, that a man may lawfully suffer his parents to starve, if he can say to them *It is a gift*, &c. i. e. what should have succoured you is given to the temple. Thus have you hypocrites made void the commandment of God, though of immutable and eternal obligation, by your frivolous traditions ; and disguised with a cloak of piety the most horrid and unnatural action whereof a man can be guilty.” See the note on Mark vii. 11. Dr. Heylin reads the 5th and 6th verses thus : *But you say, that whoever will declare to his father or mother, that what he might assist them with is an oblation, shall hereby be free from his obligation to maintain them. Thus you invalidate the command of God by your tradition.*

Ver.

Ver. 11. Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth] Our Lord addressing the multitude, observed to them, that nothing could be more absurd than the precepts which the Scribes and Pharisees endeavoured to inculcate; anxious about trifles, they neglected the great duties of morality, which are of unchangeable obligation. They shuddered with horror at *hands unwashed*, but were perfectly easy under the guilt of *impure minds*; although *not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man*, i. e. rendereth a man impure in the sight of God, *but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man*; because, in the sight of God, cleanness and uncleanness are qualities not of the body, but of the mind, which can be polluted by nothing but sin. Our Lord did not at all mean to overthrow the distinction which the law had established between things clean and unclean in the matter of man's food; that distinction, like all the other emblematical institutions of Moses, was wisely appointed, being designed to teach the Israelites how carefully the familiar company and conversation of the wicked is to be avoided: He only affirmed, that in itself no kind of meat can defile the *mind*, which is the *man*, though by accident it may: A man may bring guilt upon himself by eating what is pernicious to his health, or by excess in the quantity of food and liquour; and a Jew might have done it by presumptuously eating what was forbidden by the Mosaic law, which still continued in force; yet in all these instances the pollution would arise from the wickedness of the heart, and be proportionable to it; which is all our Lord asserts. See Macknight, Doddridge, Calmet.

Ver. 13. Every plant, &c.] *Every plantation, &c.*, i. e. *doctrine*. The metaphor was familiar

in the time of our Lord, and is still used by the Jewish writers, with whom *to pull up plantations* signifies "to deny articles of faith." See Heylin and Wettstein.

Ver. 21, 22. Then Jesus went thence] It may easily be believed, that the Pharisees were highly offended at the liberty which Jesus took in the preceding discourse; for he had plucked off from them the mask wherewith they had covered their deformity, and rendered themselves so venerable in the eyes of the vulgar. Accordingly, their plots being levied against his reputation and life, he judged it proper to retire into the remote regions which lay between the cities of Tyre and Sidon, proposing to conceal himself a while. Sidon was a very ancient town, having been built by Sidon, the eldest son of Canaan, the son of Ham, the son of Noah. It appears from Joshua xxii. 9. that the whole country westward of Jordan was called *Canaan*, that on the east being named Gilead. From the same book, ch. xix. 28, 29. we learn that Tyre and Sidon were cities in the lot of Asher, which Tribe having never been able wholly to drive out the natives, their posterity remained even in our Lord's time. Hence he did not preach the doctrine of the kingdom in this country, because it was inhabited principally by heathens, to whom he was not *sent*; see ch. x. 5. Neither did he work miracles here with that readiness which he shewed every where else. The reason was, he proposed to shun the Pharisees by concealing himself; but he could not be hid. It seems he was personally known to many of the Gentiles in this country, who no doubt had often heard and seen him in Galilee. See Mark iii. 8. As for the rest, they were sufficiently acquainted with him by his fame, which had spread itself very early through

through all Syria; see ch. iv. 24. In one of the towns in this remote country there lived a *Canaanitish woman*, whose *daughter was possessed with a devil*. She was a descendant of the ancient inhabitants, and by religion a *heathen*, as seems plain from St. Mark, who calls her a *Greek*, a *Syrophœnician* by nation, ch. vi. 26. For since the woman's nation is mentioned in the latter clause, the title of a *Greek*, which is given her in the former, must certainly be the denomination of her religion. But though this woman was ignorant of the true religion, she had conceived a very great, honourable, and just opinion not only of our Lord's power and goodness, but even of his character as Messiah, which she had gained a knowledge of by conversing with the Jews; for when she had heard of his arrival, she went in quest of him, and meeting him as he passed along the street, she addressed him with the title of *Son of David*, or promised Messiah, and cried after him for a cure of her daughter. See Macknight.

Ver. 23. But he answered her not a word] Jesus did not seem to regard the woman, intending that the greatness of her faith should be made to appear; An end, highly worthy the wisdom of Jesus; because it not only justified his conduct in working a miracle for an heathen, but was a sharp rebuke to the Jews for their infidelity. As it appears from Mark vii. 24. that Christ was *entered into a house*, and that the application of this woman prevented his being concealed, as he desired to have been; it should seem, that having learned that Jesus was there, watched for the disciples, as they went in and out, and having *cried after them* some time, she at length got admittance into the house, and with the profoundest respect accosted him; at first from
some

some distance, and then drew near and threw herself at his feet. See Doddridge, and sermon 15. vol. ii. of my discourses on the miracles.

Ver. 24. I am not sent, but, &c.] See the note on ch. x. 5. "Though I am come to save all the nations of the world, *my* ministry must be confined to the Israelites."

Ver. 26. It is not meet to take the children's bread, &c.] The Jews gloried greatly in the honourable title of *God's children*, because of all nations they alone knew and worshipped the true God: they gave the name of *dogs* to the heathens for their idolatry and other pollutions, by which they had degraded themselves from the rank of reasonable creatures. This appellation marked the impurity of the Gentiles, and their odiousness in the sight of God; at the same time conveying an idea of the contempt in which they were held by the holy nation: Though in some respects it was applicable, it must have been very offensive to the heathens. Nevertheless, this good woman neither refused it, nor grudged the Jews the honourable title of *children*: She acknowledged the justness of what Christ said, and by a strong exercise of faith, drew an argument from it, which the candour and benevolence of his disposition could not resist.

Ver. 29—31. And Jesus departed from thence.] Jesus at length departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, returned to the sea of Galilee, through the regions of Decapolis, on the east side of Jordan. See Mark vii. 31. Having tarried in Decapolis a considerable time, the fame of his being in that country reached every corner; wherefore, to avoid the crowds, he retired into a desert mountain beside the sea of Galilee. Here the *sick*, the *lame*, the *dumb*, the *blind*, and the *maimed* were brought to

to him from all quarters, and laid down around him by their friends who followed him thither. The sight of so many people in distress moved the compassion of the Son of God exceedingly ; for he graciously healed them all ; particularly on the *dumb*, who are commonly *deaf* also, He not only conferred the faculty of hearing and pronouncing articulate sounds, but he conveyed into their mind at once the whole language of their country, making them perfectly acquainted with all the words in it, their significations, their forms, their powers, and their uses, so as to comprehend the whole distinctly in their memories ; and at the same time he gave them the habit of speaking it both fluently and copiously ! This was a kind of miracle very astonishing ; but the change produced in the bodies of men was but the least part of it : what passed in their minds was the grand and principal thing, being an effect so extensive, that nothing inferior to infinite power could have produced it. With respect to the *blind* restored to sight by this great *light of the world*, they saw every object distinctly, and immediately bore, without any inconvenience, the full force of unaccustomed light ! A most wonderful circumstance, but which was universally the case, so far as we can judge by all the stories of the blind restored to sight which occur in the Gospels. The Jewish multitudes seem to have apprehended the greatness of their miracles more distinctly than the generality of Christians ; for we are told, ch. ix. 33. when Jesus opened the mouth of the dumb man, *the multitude marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.* See also ch. xii. 22, 23. Mark vii. 8. On this occasion likewise they were not silent, nor unaffected : *They glorified the God of Israel ;* acknowledging that in this event was fulfilled the
prophecy

prophecy of Ifaiah, ch. xxxv. 5. This clause makes it probable, that many heathens were now present with our Lord, beheld his miracles, and formed a just notion of them. It seems his fame spreading itself into the neighbouring countries, had made such an impression even upon the idolatrous nations, that numbers of them came from far, to hear and see the wonderful man of whom such things were reported, and if possible to experience his healing goodness; wherefore, when they beheld these effects of his power, they were exceedingly struck with them, and broke forth in praises of the God, by whose assistance and authority he acted: and it may be also, from that time forth devoted themselves to his worship. See Macknight, Beza, and Elfner.

Ver. 32—38. I have compassion on the multitude] One cannot but remark with what wisdom Jesus chose to be so much in deserts during this period of his ministry: He was resolved, in the discharge of the duties of it, to make as little noise as possible, to avoid crowds, and to be followed only by such as had dispositions proper for profiting by his instructions; and to say the truth, not a great many others would have accompanied him into solitudes, where they were to sustain the inconveniences of hunger and the weather for several days together.

CH A P. XVI.

Ver. 1. The Pharisees also.] Dr. Waterland reads and the Pharisees with, &c. While Jesus was in Dalmanutha, or Magdala, the Pharisees having heard of the second miraculous dinner and
fearing

fearing that the whole common people would acknowledge him for the Messiah, resolved to confute his pretensions fully and publickly: For this reason they came forth with the Sadducees, who, though the opposers and rivals of the Pharisees in all other matters, joined them in their design of oppressing Jesus, and together with them demanded of him *the sign from heaven*. It seems the Jews, understanding the prophecy, Dan. vii. 13. literally expected that the Messiah would make his first public appearance in the clouds of heaven, and take unto himself glory and a temporal kingdom. See the note on Chap. xii. 38, 39. Agreeably to this, Josephus describing the state of affairs in Judea under Felix, tells us, "That the deceivers and impostors pretending to inspiration, endeavoured to bring about changes, and so making the people mad, led them into the wilderness, as if it had been to shew them signs of liberty:" Wherefore, when the Pharisees desired Jesus to shew them the *sign from heaven*, they certainly meant, that he should demonstrate himself to be the Messiah, by coming in a visible and miraculous manner from heaven with great pomp, and by wresting the kingdom out of the hands of the Romans. These hypocrites craftily feigned an inclination to believe, if he would give them sufficient evidence of his mission: However their true design was, that by his failure in the proof which they required he should expose himself to the general blame. It was upon the same principles that they continued their demands in the Apostles time (see 1 Cor. i. 22.) though so many *signs from Heaven* had then been given, in the voice from thence, in the preternatural darkness at our Lord's crucifixion, in the descent of angels in repeated instances, and in that
of

of the Holy Spirit in a visible form, as well as in most sensible effects." See Josephus's Jewish War, b. ii. c. 12. and Lardner's Credibil. l. i. c. 5.

Ver. 2—3. He said unto them, &c.] Our Saviour's reply may be thus paraphrased. "It is most apparent you ask this out of a desire to cavil, rather than to learn the divine will: For, in other cases, you take up with degrees of evidence, far short of those which you here reject. As for instance, you readily say in an evening it will be fair weather to-morrow; because the sky is this evening of a bright and fiery red: And in the morning,—It will be tempestuous weather to-day, for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, you know how to distinguish the face of the heavens, and to form from thence probable conjectures concerning the weather, and can you not distinguish the signs of the present times; and see by the various miracles which are daily performed amongst you, by the prophetic, and various other tokens which attend mine appearance, that this is indeed the period which you profess to desire with so much eagerness, and which you might discern with much less sagacity."

Ver. 13. When Jesus came into the coasts, &c.] The situation of *Paneas* pleased Philip the Tetrarch so exceedingly, that he resolved to make it the seat of his court; for which purpose he enlarged and adorned it with many sumptuous buildings, and called it *Cæsarea*, in honour of the Roman emperor: The Tetrarch's name however, was commonly added to distinguish it from the other *Cæsarea*, so often mentioned in the *Acts*, which was a fine port in the Mediterranean sea, and had been rebuilt by Herod the Great, and named in honour of Augustus Cæsar. See the notes on *Acts* viii. 40. Josephus gives Philip so good a character, that
some

some have thought our Lord retired into his territories for security from the insults of his enemies elsewhere. See L'Enfant's Introduction, p. 27.

Ver. 14. And they said, some, &c.] Perhaps they who held Christ to be Elias did not think him the Messiah, but only his forerunner. This being the received opinion of the whole nation, that Elias was to come before the Messiah, and anoint him when he came. They who thought he was *John the Baptist* risen from the dead, speak suitably to the opinion of the Pharisees, "who, saith Josephus, held that there was for good men an easy return to life." That *he was Jeremiah*, or *one of the Prophets*, was the consequence of an opinion which prevailed, that the Messiah was to come not from the living, but from the dead: As they thought none of that age of piety sufficient to bear him, and that the resurrection was to begin with his kingdom, they might easily be induced to think, that he would be one who would rise from the dead; and as God had said of Jeremiah, that *he was set to root up, pull down, and destroy kingdoms*, &c. ch. i. 5—10, and it was their opinion that the great business of the king Messiah was to pull down all the nations which ruled over them, and make them tributaries and servants to the Jews, they might on this account pitch on them, as the fittest person to be the Messiah. See Whitby, Craddock's Harmony, and 2 Macc. ii. 5. Mr. L'Enfant thinks, that they mentioned Jeremiah rather than any other prophet, because the ancient Jews used to place Jeremiah at the head of the prophets. It seems to follow, both from the question in the preceding and in the following verse, that Jesus had not as yet directly assumed the title of the Messiah at least in their hearing.

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Ver.

Ver. 17—18. Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona! &c.] Bar-jona is *the son of Jona*. Some authors suppose, that *John* and *Jona* are one and the same name. *Flesh and blood* is an Hebraism, signifying his own reason, or any natural power whatsoever. This knowledge had not been communicated to him either by the sentence of the Sanhedrim, declaring Jesus to be the Messiah, or by the authority of any human testimony whatsoever, but merely by the teaching of God. See on John vi. 45. “Blessed and happy art thou, O Peter; for this confession which thou hast made is not a bare human confession, formed by report, so by the unassisted sagacity of thy own mind, but my Father in heaven hath discovered it to thee, and wrought in thy soul this cordial assent, in the midst of those prejudices against it, which present circumstances might suggest.” Our Saviour goes on and promises (alluding to his surname of Peter, which comes from *Πετρα*, a rock) that he should have a principal concern in establishing his kingdom. “Thou art, as thy name signifies, a substantial *Rock*; and as thou hast shewn it in this good faith in me, as the son of God, shall be its great support, and I will use *thee* as a glorious instrument in raising it.”

Ver. 19. And I will give unto thee the keys.] The *keys of the kingdom of heaven*, which on this occasion are given to Peter, are to be understood metaphorically; for our Lord’s meaning was, that Peter should open the gates of the *kingdom of heaven* or *Gospel dispensation*, both to Jews and Gentiles; *i. e.* should be the first who preached the Gospel to them, particularly the latter; and in this sense Peter seems to have understood the matter himself, Acts xv. 7. It can be no objection
against

against this interpretation, that it connects the idea of *binding* and *loosing* with that of the *keys*, contrary to the exact propriety of the metaphors. The power of *binding* and *loosing* now conferred on Peter, and afterwards on all the Apostles, (see ch. xviii. 18.) was a power of declaring the laws of the Gospel, and the terms of salvation; for in the Jewish nation, to *bind* and *loose* were words made use of by the doctors to signify the unlawfulness or lawfulness of things. Wherefore our Lord's meaning was, "Whatever things thou shalt *bind* up for men, or declare forbidden on earth, shall be forbidden by heaven; and whatsoever things thou shalt *loose* to men, or bid to be done, shall be lawful and obligatory in the esteem of heaven." Accordingly it may be observed that the gender made use of in both passages agrees to this interpretation: In that under consideration it is δ , not $\sigma\nu$; in the other it is $\sigma\alpha$, not $\sigma\sigma\upsilon\varsigma$. There are some, however, who by the power of binding and loosing understand the power of actually retaining and remitting men's sins directly; and in support of their opinion, they produce John xx. 25. *Whosoever sins ye remit, &c.* But the expression of remitting or forgiving sins, is used by our Lord to denote the removal of their temporal punishments. See for a proof ch. ix. 2. and viii. 17. It may therefore be justly doubted, whether our Lord ever bestowed on his Apostles a particular power of remitting and retaining any thing but the temporal punishment of men's sins; unless we choose to call the power of declaring the terms of salvation, now committed to Peter, and afterwards to the Apostles, a power of remitting and retaining men's sins, because, according to those terms, men shall either be acquitted or condemned. This high power of declaring the term of salva-

tion, and precepts of the Gospel, the Apostles did not enjoy in its full extent till the memorable day of Pentecost, when they received the Holy Ghost in the plenitude of his gifts. After this, their decisions on points of doctrine and duty being all given by inspiration, were infallible definitions, and ratified in heaven.

Ver. 20. Then charged he his disciples, &c.] Jesus forbid his disciples to tell any man that he was the Messiah, because, according to the divine decree, he was to be rejected by the great men as a false Christ, and to suffer the punishment of death. Circumstances, which could not fail to give his followers great offence, as they did not yet understand the nature of his kingdom; for which reason he thought it better to leave every one to form a judgment of his character from his doctrine and miracles, than in all places to assume the title of Messiah publicly, under such disadvantages. Or, his meaning may have been, "Because it is determined that the Messiah shall suffer death, it is not proper to assume that title publicly lest the people declaring in my behalf, endeavour to prevent the execution of the divine decree." The Romans certainly, says Mr. Locke, would not have suffered him, if he had gone about preaching, that he was the king whom the Jews expected: Such an accusation would have been forwardly brought against him by the Jews, if they could have heard it out of his own mouth, and if that had been his public doctrine to his followers, which was openly preached by his Apostles after his death, and of which they were accused, Acts xvii. 5, 9. Though the magistrates of the world had no great regard to the talk of a king who had suffered death, and appeared no longer every where; yet, if our Saviour had
openly

openly declared this of himself in his life-time, with a train of disciples and followers, every where owning and crying him up for the king, the Roman governors of Judea could not have forborne to take notice of it, and to make use of their force against it. In this the Jews were not mistaken, and therefore they made use of it, as the strongest accusation, and likeliest to prevail with Pilate against him, for the taking away his life, it being treason, and an unpardonable offence, which could not escape death from a Roman deputy, without the forfeiture of his own life. See Luke xxiii. 2. and the note on Matt. xii. 16. Dr. Waterland, following many of the MSS. leaves out the word *Jesus*.

Ver. 21. From that time forth began Jesus, &c.] Though all the circumstances mentioned in this verse were marks of the Messiah, yet says Mr. Locke, how little they were understood by the Apostles, or suited to their expectation of the Messiah, appears from the manner in which they were received by Peter, ver. 22. Peter had twice before acknowledged Jesus to be the Messiah, and yet here he cannot bear the thought that he should suffer, and be put to death, and be raised again: Whereby we may perceive how little Jesus had explained to the Apostles what personally concerned himself. They had been a good while witnesses of his life and miracles, and being grown into a belief that he was the Messiah, were in some degree prepared to receive the particulars which were to fill up the character, and answer the prophecies concerning him. This, *from henceforth*, he began to open to him though in a way out of which the Jews could not form an accusation; the time of the accomplishment of all, in his sufferings, death,

and resurrection, now drawing on, (for this was in the last year of his life,) he being to meet the Jews at Jerusalem but once more at the passover, and then they were to have their will upon him; wherefore he might now begin to be a little more open concerning himself; though yet so as to keep himself out of the reach of any accusation, which might appear just or weighty to the Roman deputy.

Ver. 24. If any man will come after me] Because Peter's improper behaviour, just before mentioned, proceeded from his love of the world and its pleasures, Jesus declared publicly, that all who would be his disciples, and share with him in the glory of his kingdom, must deny themselves; i. e. be in constant readiness to renounce every earthly pleasure, with life itself, when called to do so; (see Luke xiv. 33.) and in ordinary cases, take up his cross; see on ch. x. 38.

Ver. 27. For the Son of man shall come, &c.] That the argument in the preceding verse, by which the necessity of self denial is so clearly established, might have the greater weight, our Lord spake more particularly concerning the rewards and punishments of the future state; assuring his disciples, that they were all to be distributed by himself, the Father having appointed him universal judge; so that his enemies cannot flatter themselves with the hope of escaping condign punishment, nor his friends be in the least afraid of losing their reward.

Ver. 28. Verily I say unto you] Because the doctrine of Christ's being constituted universal judge might appear to the disciples incredible at that time on account of his humiliation, he told them, that some of them should not taste of death till they saw him coming in his kingdom; and by that, had not only a proof of his being the judge, but

but an example of the judgment he was to execute: "Do not doubt that there shall be a day of judgment, when I shall come cloathed with divine majesty, and attended with millions of Angels, to render unto men according as their actions in this life have been, good or bad: there are some here present, who shall not die till they have seen a faint representation of the glory in which I will come, and an eminent example of this my power, exercised on the men of the present generation." Accordingly, the disciples saw their master coming in his kingdom, when they were witnesses of his transfiguration, resurrection, and ascension, had the miraculous gifts of the spirit conferred upon them, and lived to see Jerusalem with the Jewish state destroyed, and the Gospel propagated through the greatest part of the then known world. This verse, says Mr. Locke, which imports the dominion that some there present should see him exercise over the nation of the Jews, was so covered, by being annexed to ver. 27.—where Christ speaks of the manifestation and glory of his kingdom at the day of judgment—that though his plain meaning may be, that the appearance and visible exercise of his kingly power was so near, that some there should live to see it; yet if the foregoing words had not cast a shadow over these latter, but had been left plainly to be understood, as they plainly signified, that he should be a king, and that it was so near, that *some there* should see him in his kingdom, this might have been laid hold on, and made the matter of a plausible and seemingly just accusation against him by the Jews before Pilate. This seems to be the reason of our Saviour's inverting here the order of the two solemn manifestations to the world of his rule and power, thereby perplexing at present his

his meaning, and securing himself, as was necessary, from the malice of the Jews, which always lay ready to entrap him, and accuse him to the Roman governor, and they would no doubt have been ready to alledge these words.

C H A P. XVII.

Ver. 1. And after six days] That is, about six days if we reckon exclusively, and about eight days if we reckon inclusively, after our Lord had accepted the title of Messiah. See the note on Luke ix. 28. who has it, *about eight days after*. The two accounts differ only as if one should say, that Christ appeared to his disciples *after his death*, another *after his resurrection*: the connection with the end of the former chapter must be attended to here, as in many other places. Heylin. Tradition has generally conferred the honour of the transfiguration on mount *Tabor*, famed in ancient history for the victory which Deborah and Barak gained over Sisera, Judg. iv. 14. Reland observes, that this tradition took its rise from Mark ix. 2. where it is said, that Jesus carried Peter, James and John into an high mountain *apart by themselves*. It seems the words *κατ' ἰδίαν*, *apart*, were thought to describe the position of the mountain; and because *Tabor* is very high, and stands in the plain of *Esdraelon*, at a distance from other hills, they thought it could be said of no other mountain so properly, that it is *an high mountain by itself*. Hence the tradition of our Lord's being transfigured might arise; especially as this mountain is not only high, but verdant also, and woody, and of a beautiful regular form; nevertheless the order of the figure determines the transfiguration

figuration to some mountain not far from Cæsarea Philippi, rather than to Tabor, which was situated in the south of Galilee: for after the transfiguration, when Jesus had cured an epileptic, it is said, Mark ix. 30. that they departed and passed through Galilee, and then came to Capernaum. Now it is not very probable that the Evangelist would in this manner have related our Lord's journey from the mount of transfiguration to Capernaum, if that mountain had been in Galilee, the region in which Capernaum stood; especially if, as the continuators of Chemnitz's Harmony affirm, the word *παρὰ-πορεύεσθαι* signifies *to pass through quickly, secretly*, and as it were in a journey; yet, upon the faith of the tradition mentioned above, the Christians very early built a monastery and church on the top of Tabor, which, according to the accounts of travellers, spreads itself into an ample plain, surrounded with a wood. The church was dedicated to Jesus and his two attendants *Moses* and *Elias*, and from 2 Pet. i. 18. they called the mountain itself *the Holy Mountain*. Our Lord admitted to the singular honour of his transfiguration Peter his most zealous, James his most active, and John his most beloved disciple. It was necessary that this remarkable occurrence should be supported by sufficient evidence: hence it was that three of the disciples were chosen, because so many witnesses were required to establish a fact by the Jews, and no more were chosen, because this number was sufficient. Besides this reason for electing these three persons in particular, we may add, that Peter was the most sanguine and the most forward speaker amongst the apostles, that James was the first martyr, and that John being the survivor of all the other apostles, gave a sanction to this record, as it is most probable that he had a
sight

sight of all the other Gospels, and likewise confirmed it by his personal testimony as long as he lived. See Macknight, *Reland's Palæst. Illust.* l. i. and Maundrell's *Journey*, p. 112.

Ver. 8. And when they had lifted up their eyes, &c.] This transfiguration of our Lord was intended for several important purposes. About six days before it happened, Jesus had predicted his own sufferings and death; at the same time, to prevent his disciples from being dejected by the melancholy prospect, as well as from falling into despair when the dismal scene should open, he told them, that though in appearance he was nothing but a man, and affliction was generally to be the lot of his disciples, he would come hereafter in great glory as universal Judge, and render unto every man according to his deeds; ch. xvi. 27, 28. And for proof of this he declared, that *some of themselves should not taste of death till they saw him coming in his kingdom*; saw a lively representation of the glory which he spoke of, and were witnesses to the extent of his power as Judge, on his enemies, the unbelieving Jews, who were to be punished by him with the most terrible destruction that ever befel any nation. The first article of his promise he fulfilled by the transfiguration, wherein he gave three of his apostles both a visible representation, and also a clear proof of the glory in which he will come to judgement. That this was one principal end of the transfiguration, and of the voice from heaven which attended it, we learn from St. Peter, who urges both, to demonstrate the certainty of Christ's coming: (2 Epist. i. 16—18.) *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his Majesty. For he received*

received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And this voice which came from heaven, we heard when we were with him in the holy mount.—

Nevertheless, other purposes might likewise have been served by the transfiguration: As, I. The conference which our Lord had with Moses and Elias, concerning the sufferings he was to meet with in Jerusalem, might animate him to encounter them with resolution, and make his disciples sensible how agreeable it was to the doctrine of Moses and the prophets, that the Messiah should be evil-treated and die, before he entered into his glory. II. The appearing of these two great men, so long after they had gone into the invisible world, was a sensible proof, and a clear example of the immortality of the soul, very necessary in those times, when the opinion of the Sadducees was so prevalent.—III. To find Moses and Elias assisting Jesus in the new dispensation, must have given great satisfaction to the Jews, and particularly to the Apostles, who thus could not doubt that the Gospel was the completion and perfection of the law. For, had it not been so, Moses, the giver of the law, and Elias, who with a flaming zeal had maintained it in times of the greatest corruption, would not have appeared on earth to encourage Jesus in his design of setting it aside.—IV. The three Apostles were allowed to be witnesses of their Master's glory in the mountain, that they might not be offended by the depth of affliction into which they in particular were soon to see him plunged.—V. The transfiguration demonstrated, that all the sufferings befalling Jesus were on his part perfectly voluntary, it being as easy to have delivered himself
from

conferred on them when he ordained them, his Apostles: II. It was to arise from a sensible impression made upon their minds by the Spirit of God, signifying to them that a miracle was to be performed at that time. Accordingly the Apostles, and such of the first Christians as were afterwards honoured with a power of miracles, never attempted to exercise it without feeling an impression of this kind; as is plain from St. Paul's leaving Trophimus at Miletum sick. Wherefore, as the nine had, in all probability, attempted to cure the youth spoken of in this story, or had made the attempt with some degree of doubtfulness, it is no wonder that they were unsuccessful. To *remove mountains* is a proverbial expression, which signifies the doing of any thing seemingly impossible, as we may learn from Zech. iv. 7.

Ver. 21. This kind goeth not out, &c.] Prayer and fasting could have no relation to the rejection of demons, but so far only as they had a tendency to increase the faith of miracles in him, who had the power formerly conferred upon him. For example, *prayer*, by impressing a man's mind with more intimate sense that all things whatsoever depend upon the infinite and incomprehensible power of God raises his idea of that power to a greater sublimity than can be done in the way of speculation. And as for *fasting*, by weakening the animal life, it subdues such passions as are nourished by continual repletion of body. Hence *fasting* has a tendency to free the mind from the dominion of passion, which never fails to occasion a great inward perturbation, and at times is found to make even the best men inattentive, at least to the more silent impressions of God's Spirit. *Fasting* therefore produces

duces an inward quietness and calm, very favourable to the growth of faith.

Ver. 22. And while they abode in Galilee] It should seem that the wonder of the disciples was accompanied with proportionably high expectations of happiness in that temporal kingdom, which they were now convinced Jesus could easily erect. Our Lord knowing this, thought fit, when they came to Galilee, the country where he had the greatest train of followers, to moderate the disciples ambition, not only by concealing himself for a while, forbearing to preach and work miracles as he returned through Galilee, but also by predicting a third time his own sufferings and death. Upon this *they were exceeding sorry*, taking no comfort from the mention he made of his resurrection: the prediction concerning his death raised such fears in their minds, that they durst not ask him to explain it; especially as they remembered that he had often inculcated it, and reprimanded Peter for being unwilling to hear it.

Ver. 24. And when they were come to Capernaum] Josephus has expressly asserted, that each of the Jews used yearly to pay a didrachma, or half-shekel, the piece of money here mentioned, and in value about fifteen pence of our currency, to the service of the temple, (see Antiq. l. xviii. c. 9.) a custom which probably took its rise from the demand of that sum from each of the Israelites whenever they were *numbered*, Exod xxx. 13. Thus Casaubon, Hammond, and many other great critics understood it. It was gathered every year through all their cities; and, as it should seem from the manner of the collector's making the demand, was a voluntary thing, which custom rather than law had established. See Neh. x. 32. Beza is of opinion, that

that it was the poll-tax levied by the Romans, after Judea was reduced into the form of a province, (see ch. xxii. 17.) and which Agrippa Major, in the reign of Claudius, remitted to the Jews. If this was the tribute which the collectors demanded of Peter, the import of their question was this: "Is your master of the sect of Judas of Galilee, whose opinion is, that taxes should be paid to no foreign power?"

Ver. 25—27. He saith, yes.] Peter told the collectors, that his master would pay tribute, and consequently, made a sort of promise to secure it for them; yet when he considered the matter more maturely, he was afraid to speak to the Messiah concerning his paying taxes upon any pretence whatsoever: In the mean time Jesus knowing both what had happened, and what was turning in Peter's thoughts, saved him the pain of introducing the discourse: *Jesus prevented him, saying, what thinkest thou Simon, &c.* Hereby insinuating, that because he was himself the Son of the Great King, to whom heaven, earth and sea, and all things in them belong, he was not obliged to pay tribute, as not holding any thing by a derived right from any king whatever. Or if, as is more probable, the contribution was made for the service and reparation of the temple, his meaning was, that being the Son of Him to whom the tribute was paid, he could justly have excused himself. Nevertheless, that he might not give offence, He sent Peter to the lake with a line and a hook, telling him, that in the mouth of the first fish that came he should find a *stater*, a Grecian piece of money so called, equal in value to two *didrachma*, or one *shekel* of Jewish money, the sum required for himself and for Peter.

C H A P. XVIII.

Ver. 1. At the same time came the disciples.] This chapter is connected with the two preceding; for after Christ had delivered the Keys of the Kingdom of heaven to Peter, and had taken him up into the mountain with James and John, leaving the rest of his Apostles, these three seem to have exalted themselves above their colleagues, and to have been envied by them. In consequence of their ambition, they began to inquire which of them should hold the highest office under the Messiah?

Ver. 2. Jesus called a little child.] See Luke ix. 46. Mark ix. 33. To check the foolish emulation of his disciples, Jesus called a little child to him, and having set him in *the midst*, that they might consider him attentively, he shewed them by the sweetness, docility, and modesty visible in his countenance, what the temper and dispositions of disciples ought to be, and how dear to him persons of such dispositions are, though otherwise weak and infirm. The method of instruction here used was agreeable to the manner of the Eastern doctors and Prophets, who, in teaching, impressed the minds of their disciples by symbolical actions, as well as by words. Thus John xx. 22. Jesus by *breathing on his Apostles*, signified, that through the invisible energy of his power he conferred on them the gifts of his spirit. Thus, also, John xxi. 19. he bade Peter *follow him*, to shew that he was to be his follower in afflictions.

And in Rev. xviii. 21. an angel casts a great stone into the sea, to signify the utter destruction of Babylon. For more examples, see John xiii. 4, 5. 14. Acts xxi. 11. and Macknight.

Ver. 3, 4. And said, Verily, &c.] “So far shall ye be from becoming the greatest in my kingdom, that ye shall not so much *as enter it* unless ye be, like little children, free from pride, covetousness and ambition, and resemble them in humility, sincerity, docility, and in disengagement of affection from the things of the present life, which fire the ambition of grown men.” Who-soever therefore (ver. 4.) rests satisfied with the province which God has assigned him, whatever it may be, and meekly receives all the divine instructions, though contrary to his own inclinations, and prefers others in honour to himself, such a person is really the greatest in my kingdom. The first step towards entering into the kingdom of grace is to become as little children, lovely in heart, knowing ourselves utterly ignorant and helpless, and depending wholly on our father who is in heaven for a supply of all our wants. Except we be turned from darkness to light, and be renewed in the image of God here, we can never enter into the kingdom of Glory.

Ver. 5, 6. And who so shall receive, &c.] “All who in the sense above explained are little children, are unspeakably dear to me, therefore help them all you can, as if it were myself in person, and see that ye offend them not; *i. e.* that ye neither turn them out of the way, nor hinder them in it.” Dr. Clarke thinks, that *little ones* mean plain and sincere Christians, before compared, for their simplicity and sincerity, to little children; and that to *offend* them signifies to *cast a stumbling block before them*,

them, to cause them to sin, to discourage them in their duty, or tempt to offend. So that whoever, by a scandalous life, should lead others to think ill of the Christian profession in general, or should by persecution discourage the weak or by sophistry, bad example, or otherwise pervert them from the way of truth and goodness, would fall under the weight of the terrible sentence here denounced. Casaubon, Elfner, and others, have shewn at large, that drowning in the sea was a punishment frequently used amongst the Syrians, Greeks and Romans; and that the persons condemned had sometimes heavy stones tied about their necks, or were rolled up in sheets of lead, καταποντίζουσαι, to sink them with the weight. It seems to have grown into a proverb for dreadful and inevitable ruin. See on chap. xiv. 28. and Mintert on the word καταποντίζω. Μύλος ὄνικος properly signifies a mill-stone too large to be turned, as some were by the hand; and requiring the force of asses to move it, as it seems those animals were generally used by the Jews on this occasion. See Raphelius, Kiping. Antiq. Rom. 1. ii. c. 7. and Lightfoot.

Ver. 7. For it must needs be that offences come.] See Luke xviii. 1. where our Lord expresses this more fully; *It is impossible but that offences will come; impossible through the weakness, folly, and wickedness of mankind. But woe unto the man by whom, i. e. by whose fault these offences or scandals, come!*

Ver. 8. Wherefore, if thy hand or foot offend thee.] Make thee to offend. Wat. and MS. and so ver. 9. Our Lord here renews the exhortation which he formerly gave, ch. 5. 30. rather to submit to the severest mortifications, than to indulge our sinful inclinations, to the scandal of others, and

and to our own ruin. We may observe that St. Matthew, who had so largely recorded the sermon on the mount, gives us again this passage of it on the present occasion; which is one proof among others, that he did not think it improper or unnecessary sometimes to repeat what he had then said; and considering the importance of these maxims, and how little many of his hearers were disposed to receive and retain them, it was a valuable instance of his compassion and wisdom. See Doddridge.

Ver. 10, 11. Take heed that ye despise not, &c.] Because pride, or an high opinion of oneself, with a contempt of others, is often the parent of offences, our Lord solemnly cautioned his disciples against that evil, and shewed them the reasonableness of it by this delightful argument,—that the meanest Christian is an object of the care of Providence. *Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones*; one who is converted, and become as a little child; one of my real disciples, of whom I have been speaking to you; *for I say unto you that in heaven, &c.* which Dr. Clarke interprets, “they are the care of angels, and under the protection of God.” Our Lord, says Macknight, does not seem to mean, that every particular saint has a guardian angel assigned him; but as all the angels *are sent forth ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation*, they may in general be called *their angels*. The expression *behold the face of my father*, alludes to the custom of earthly courts, where the great men, those who are highest in office and favour, are more frequently in the prince’s palace and presence. Wherefore, when we are told that the *angels* of the least of Christ’s disciples behold the face of God, the meaning is, that the chief angels are employed in
taking

taking care of such; and our Lord's reasoning is both strong and beautiful, when on this account he cautions us against despising them. To conclude, by telling them that the *Son of man was come to seek and save that which was lost*; and by delivering the parable of the lost sheep, which its owner found after much painful searching, he hath eminently displayed the immense care which the Father Almighty takes of men, and hath given us a just notion of the value which he puts on the least of his reasonable creatures. He gives his highest angels charge concerning them, he has sent his only begotten Son to save them, and condescends to share in the joy which the heavenly beings are filled with upon their recovery. The particle *nam*, rendered *for* in ver. 11. introduces another reason to enforce the caution not to despise *those little ones*; and therefore would be rendered more properly, *moreover*, or *further*. "Not only the *angels* minister to their salvation, but I, the Lord of men and angels, am come down from heaven for their sakes." See Macknight, Grotius, and Suicer's Thesaurus, vol. i. p. 42. *and word*

Ver. 14. Even so, &c.] That is, "God greatly delights in the conversion and salvation of men, and is at as much pains to reclaim them, as a shepherd is to bring back a sheep which hath strayed from the fold." We may observe the gradation in these verses: first, the *angels* do not despise these little ones;—neither the *Son*,—nor the *Father*. *by blow*

Ver. 15—17. Moreover, if thy brother shall trespass, &c.] Our Lord having thus spoken to the *persons offending*, now addresses his discourse to the *persons offended*; shewing them in what manner they ought to behave towards an offending brother; and whosoever shall closely observe this three-fold rule,

rule, will seldom offend others, and never be offended himself. "If any, more especially one who is a member of the same religious community, do any thing amiss, of which thou art an eye or an ear-witness, *first* go and tell him alone: if it may be, *in person*; if that cannot so well be done, by thy *messenger*, or in writing: If this succeed, thou hast gained thy brother; hast recovered him to God, who rejoices at the repentance of a sinner; and to thyself, with whom he was at enmity; and so hast saved him from perishing." See Prov. xxviii. 23. Observe, our Lord gives no liberty to omit this, or exchange it for either of the following steps: "If this gentle method does not succeed, *secondly*, Take with thee one or two more men, whom he esteems and loves, who may then confirm and enforce what thou sayest, and afterwards, if need require, bear witness of what was spoken. (See Deut. xix. 15.) If even this doth not succeed, then, and not before, *tell it to the church*, or to that particular congregation of the faithful to which he belongs; whose sentence being declared, will shew him, that in the judgement of all good men, thou hast done thy duty, and he is to blame. If all this avails not, you will do well to enter into a protest against him, by forbearing any intimate friendship with such a person; and let him therefore, in this case, *be to thee as an heathen and a publican*, or other most notorious sinner, to whom you would perform only the common offices of humanity, but would avoid his intimate society, as scandalous; and to whom you are not under those peculiar obligations, whereby Christian brethren are bound to each other." Can any thing be plainer than this?—Christ here as expressly commands all Christians who see a brother do evil, to follow this method,

method, not another, and to take these steps in this order,—as he does, to honour our father and mother.—But if so, in what land do the Christians live? See Doddridge, and Bengelius.

Ver. 18. Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, &c.] Our Saviour here confers on his *disciples in general* the power of *binding* and *loosing*, which he had formerly conferred on *Peter* singly; but the present grant, from the connection in which it stands, appears manifestly to refer to something further than the former, which had respect to nothing but *doctrine*. Whatever Peter declared lawful and unlawful should be held so by heaven; whereas here it relates not only to doctrine, but to *discipline*. If by their admonitions, whether public or private, the Apostles brought their brethren to repentance, they *loosed* the guilt of their sins, the fetters by which the divine justice detains men its prisoners; or, as it is expressed above, they *gain their brethren*. On the other hand, if the offending brother continued impenitent, after the methods prescribed were all tried, they *bound* his guilt the faster upon him; because, according to the laws of heaven,—the terms of salvation which they were to preach by inspiration, none but penitents shall obtain pardon. Wetstein gives the following explanation of this verse: “If any one shall despise your sentence passed upon him, according to your appointed rules, he will do it to his own extreme hazard; for, refusing to return into favour with you, he will be esteemed guilty before God. On the contrary, if he shall reconcile himself to you, he shall also obtain from God pardon for the sin committed against you.” See Macknight, Grotius, and ch. vii. 19.

Ver. 21, 22. Then—came Peter—and said, Lord, how oft, &c.] *How oft may, &c. and must I forgive*

forgive him? MS. When our Saviour had given his advice for the accommodation of differences among his disciples, Peter, imagining it might be abused by ill-disposed persons, as an encouragement to offer injuries to others, asks his Lord, How often his brother might offend, and still claim forgiveness? See Luke xvii. 4. where it is *seven times in a day*, which implies *very often*. Here it is *seven times only*, a mode of expression which some imagine to have been borrowed from a Jewish tradition, by which the necessity of pardoning in lighter matters, is limited to *seven times* and no more. In opposition to this tradition, our Lord may be understood as extending the terms of forgiveness, and ordering that pardon should be repeated as often as the injury;—*till seventy times seven*,—as often as there is occasion; a certain number for an uncertain. See Grotius, and Wetstein.

Ver. 23. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened, &c.] “*For this reason*, or, with respect to this matter, I may properly say that *the kingdom of heaven*, in its constitution and final process, *may be likened to*, or illustrated by the instance of a certain king, who ruled over a large country, and who, as he had a great number of officers under him, was determined at length to settle accounts with his servants.” Thus our Lord illustrates the excellent morality in the preceding verse, by a lively parable; in which is shewn the necessity of forgiving the greatest injuries in every case, where the offending party is sensible of his fault, and promises amendment; a necessity of the strongest kind, arising from this law of the divine government, that it is the condition upon which God forgives our offences against him. See ch. vi. 12.

Ver.

Ver. 24. One was brought unto him, &c.] When the king began to inspect the accounts of his servants, one was brought unto him,—probably his steward or treasurer,—who had so abused the eminent station in which he had been placed, and the high confidence which his prince had reposed in him, that he owed him a most immense sum, and stood accountable for *ten thousand talents*; i. e. upwards of 1,870,000*l.* sterling. The Prussian editors say, that the *ten thousand talents* are here put for an immense sum. Our Lord seems to mention so large a sum with a design to intimate the number and weight of our offences against God, and our utter incapacity of making him any satisfaction. See Prideaux's *Connection*, vol. i. preface, p. xx. and vol. ii. p. 138.

Ver. 25. But forasmuch as he had not to pay] As it plainly appeared by this servant's having run through such vast sums, that he had been both negligent and extravagant, his lord, according to frequent custom in such cases, *ordered him, &c. to be sold.* See Exod. xxii. 3. Lev. xxv. 39. 2 Kings iv. 1. Neh. v. 5, Isai. l. 1. Not that the value of him, his family and effects, was any way equal to the debt, but as a punishment for his wickedness; for on any other supposition, it is hard to conceive how his lord, whose humanity and goodness was so great, came to take so rigorous a measure, especially as the advantage accruing to himself therefrom must have been but a trifle, in comparison of his loss. See Macknight, and Olearius.

Ver. 27. Then the Lord—was moved with compassion] See ch. xv. 32. It is plain that the Lord forgave the servant his debt conditionally, as is strongly implied by the revocation of the pardon afterwards, ver. 34.

Ver. 28. Which owed him an hundred pence] The Roman *penny* or *denarius* here spoken of, being in value about *seven pence halfpenny* of our money, the whole sum which was due to him did not much exceed three pounds sterling; therefore the servant's demanding this trifle in so rough a manner from his fellow-servant, immediately on his coming out from the palace, where so much lenity had been shewed to him in a matter of far greater importance, manifested the very basest disposition in the man. The word ἐπνίγε, which we render *took him by the throat*, imports the doing so in the most furious manner, so as almost to *strangle* him; and yet more strongly expresses the man's cruelty.

Ver. 31. His fellow-servants—told unto their Lord, &c.] Διὰφασαν, “They gave their Lord an exact and faithful account,” which is the full meaning of the word. See Albert, and the *Reflections* at the end.

Ver. 32. O thou wicked servant!] *Slave*. Dodridge; who observes that the word Δούλ is not always a term of reproach, nor does it necessarily imply more than *servant*; yet in this connection the word *slave* seems best to express the indignation with which his lord is supposed to speak. The verb παρεάλεις rendered *desiredst*, implies something more strong; *because thou didst earnestly request and intreat me*.

Ver. 34. Delivered him to the tormentors] Βασανισαῖς, the *executioners of justice*. Heylin. The word doth not only signify *executioners*, or persons who put criminals to the *torture*, but also *gaolers*, who had the charge of prisoners and examined them. Imprisonment is a much severer punishment in the eastern parts of the world than here: state prisoners especially, when condemned to it,
are

are not only forced to submit to a very mean and scanty allowance, but are frequently loaded with *clogs*, or *yokes of heavy wood*, in which they cannot either lie or sit at ease; and by frequent scourgings, and sometimes by racking, are quickly brought to an untimely end: There is probably a reference to this in the present passage. It may perhaps seem at first a very improper method pursued by the *lord* of obtaining payment in these circumstances; yet when it is considered that the man's behaviour to his fellow-servant shewed him to be a wretch not only of the most barbarous disposition, but extremely covetous; his lord had reason to suspect that he had secreted his money and goods, especially as nothing appeared in his possession; wherefore he wisely ordered him to be tortured on the rack, till he should discover with whom they were lodged, and make complete payment.—Besides, it may be considered in the light of a punishment incomparably heavier than that which was to have been inflicted on him purely for his insolence: for though the debt was immense, yet whilst it appeared to have been contracted not by fraud, but by extravagance and bad management, he was only to be sold with his family, for a certain term of years, that payment might be made as far as their price would go; but now that he added to his former misbehaviour, covetousness, and unmercifulness in the exaction of a trifling debt from a fellow-servant, to whom he ought to have been more indulgent for the sake of their common lord, who had been so kind to him; there was all the reason in the world to suspect, that in his lord's affairs he was more fraudulent than negligent; for which cause he was *delivered to the tormentors*, to be punished in the manner his crimes deserved: than which a stronger representation of

God's displeasure against men of unmerciful, unforgiving, and revengeful dispositions cannot be set forth, or even conceived, by the utmost force of human imagination. May it not be proper to put it here to the consciences of some, and to ask, whether rigour in exacting temporal debts, in treating without mercy such as are *unable* to satisfy them, and confining them in a miserable prison, where they are totally incapacitated from any probability of satisfying them;—whether this can be allowed to a *Christian*, who is bound to imitate his God and Father?—to a *debtor*, who can expect forgiveness only on the condition of forgiving others?—to a *servant*, who should obey his master?—and to a *criminal*, who is in daily expectation of his judge and final sentence? See Macknight, Hesychius, and Samedo's China. p. 225.

REFLECTIONS ON CHAP. XVIII.

How unreasonable and how odious does a severe and uncharitable temper appear, when we view it in the light of this just and convincing *parable*! ver. 23. &c. which may be considered as our Lord's explication of the fifth petition of his own prayer, there are three things in it opposed to each other; the Lord to his servant,—an immense sum to a trifle, and the most extraordinary clemency to the greatest cruelty. The application of the parable therefore is easy, and sufficient to overturn all the arguments whereby evil minds would justify revenge; particularly those taken from the nature and number of the offences committed, or from the dignity of the person against whom they are committed, or from the benefits conferred on the persons who commit them.

them. For, in the first place, what are men compared with God? In the second place, how immense a debt doth each of us owe to him? A debt, which from infancy we begin to contract, and are daily increasing in our ripening years. And in the third place, how trifling are the offences which our brethren commit against us, perhaps through inadvertency, or in consequence of some provocation received from us!

CHAP. XIX.

Ver. 3. The Pharisees also came, &c. for every cause] *For every fault.* MS. *At discretion.* Version of 1729. Our Lord had delivered his sentiments on this subject twice; once in Galilee, ch. v. 31. and again in Perea, Luke xvi. 18. It is probable, therefore, that they knew his opinion, and solicited him to declare it, hoping it would incense the people, who reckoned the liberty which the law gave them of divorcing their wives, one of their chief privileges. Or, if, standing in awe of the people, he should deliver a doctrine different from what he had taught on former occasions, they thought it would be a fit ground of accusing him of dissimulation. But they missed their aim entirely; for Jesus, always consistent with himself, boldly declared the third time against arbitrary divorces, not in the least fearing the popular resentment. See Macknight, and the note on ch. v. 31, 32.

Ver. 4—7. And he answered, &c.] The accounts which St. Matthew and St. Mark have given of this matter, though they seem to clash upon the first view, are in reality perfectly consistent. The two historians, indeed, take notice of different particulars,

lars, but these, when joined together mutually throw a light on each other. According to both Evangelists, the Pharisees came with an insidious intention, and asked our Lord's opinion concerning divorce: But the answer returned to their question is differently represented by the historians. Matthew says, that our Lord desired the Pharisees to consider the original institution of marriage in Paradise, when God created the human kind of different sexes, and implanted in their breasts such a mutual inclination towards each other, as in warmth and strength surpasses all the other affections wherewith he hath endowed them; and because they have such a strong love to each other he declared, that in all ages they should neglect every other tie, and among the rest that which binds them to their parents, and unites them together by marriage; and that male and female, thus joined together in marriage, are by the strength of their mutual affection *no more twain, but one flesh*; i. e. constitute only one person in respect of the unity of their inclinations and interests, and of the mutual power which they have over each others body, (1 Cor. vi. 16. vii. 4.) and that as long as they continued faithful to this law, they must remain undivided till death separate them.

Thus, according to St. Matthew, our Lord answered the Pharisees question concerning divorce, by referring to the original institution of marriages in Paradise; but St. Mark says, ch. x. 3. that he answered it by referring them to the Mosaical precept, he answered, *What did Moses command you?* The Evangelists, however, may be easily freed from the imputation of inconsistency, by supposing, that the answer in St. Mark was given after the Pharisees

fees had, as St. Matthew informs us, ver. 7. objected the precept in the law to the argument against divorce drawn from the original institution. *Why then did Moses, &c.* "If divorce be contrary to the original institution of marriage, as you affirm, how came it that Moses has commanded us to give a bill of divorce, and to put her away?" The Pharisee, by calling the law concerning divorce a *command*, insinuated, that Moses had been so tender of their happiness, that he would not suffer them to live with bad wives, though they themselves had been willing; but peremptorily enjoined them, that such should be put away: To this our Lord answers, Mark x. 3.

What did Moses command you, &c. and this question being placed in this order, implies, that he wondered how they came to consider Moses' permission in the light of an absolute command, since it was granted merely on account of the hardness of their hearts. See Macknight, Doddridge, and the other harmonists, and the following note.

Ver. 8. Because of the hardness of your hearts] He meant their passionate, stubborn, perverse temper, which was such, that had they not been permitted to divorce their wives, some would not have scrupled to murder them; others would have got rid of them by suborning witnesses, to prove the crime of adultery against them. Others would have reckoned it great mildness, if they had contented themselves with separating from their wives, and living unmarried; and thus God's design of multiplying his people exceedingly, must have been frustrated, as the hated wives would either have murdered, or denied the liberty of propagating by other husbands; a privilege which was secured to them by divorce. Moses therefore acted as a prudent lawgiver, in allowing other causes of divorce besides

besides whoredom, because by admitting the less, he avoided the greater evil. At the same time the Jews, whose hardness of heart rendered this expedient necessary, were chargeable with all the evils which followed it; for which reason, as often as they divorced their wives, unless in the case of *adultery*, they sinned against the original law of marriage, and were criminal in the sight of God, notwithstanding their law allowed such divorces. Our Lord, as Grotius well observes, strongly intimates, that a more tender disposition than that which characterized the Jews under the Mosaic dispensation, might justly be expected from his disciples.

Ver. 9. Whoever shall put away his wife, &c.] The practice of unlimited divorces which prevailed among the Jews, gave great encouragement to family quarrels, was very destructive of charity and hindered the good education of their common offspring: Besides, it tended not a little to make their children lose that reverence for them, to avoid engaging in a quarrel. Our Lord's prohibition, therefore of these divorces, is founded on the strongest reason, and tends highly to the peace and welfare of society. See Macknight, and Mintert on the word *πορνεία*.

Ver. 10. If the case of man be so, &c.] The disciples observed to their Lord, that since the law of marriage is so rigid, that unless the woman breaks the bond by going astray, her husband cannot dismiss her, but must bear with her, whatever are her other vices, deformities or defects,—a man had better not marry at all. To this our Lord replies, that certainly it is not in every one's power to live continently; yet if any man has the gift, whether by natural constitution, or by the injury
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of human force used upon him, which has rendered him incapable of matrimonial union,—according to that infamous traffick which the luxury and effeminacy of the eastern world rendered so common; or by an ardent desire of promoting the interests of religion, animating him to subdue his natural appetite, and enabling him to live in voluntary chastity, unincumbered with the cares of the world; such a person will not sin, though he leads a single life. That the amputation of desire only is meant by the phrase, *who have made themselves eunuchs*, may be gathered from the other clauses of the passage, for there is mention made first of *eunuchs who were so born from their mother's womb*: plainly importing that some are continent by natural constitution. Next we are told of *eunuchs who have been made so by men*; and last of all, there be, *who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake*; not by doing violence to themselves but by a strong resolution of living continently in a state of celibacy, for the sake of promoting more effectually the interests of religion. See 1 Cor. vii. 7, 37. Our Lord adds, *He that is able to receive it let him receive it*; which words must not be referred to the clauses immediately preceding them, as if our Lord meant to say, “He who is able to become an eunuch, by any one of the ways I have mentioned, let him become one:” for the second way is without all question unlawful: But they must refer to ver. 11. as is plain from the words themselves. In that verse Jesus had said, *All men cannot receive this saying, &c.* “They cannot live without marriage chaste, unless they have the gift of continency.” In the 12th verse he shews how that gift is obtained, mentioning three ways of it; and then adds, *he that is able to receive it let him receive it.* “He who
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by any of the methods I have mentioned is in a capacity of living chastely, may continue unmarried without sinning." We may just observe, that what is here said of a single life, is entirely perverted by the Roman catholics, when they produce it to discredit matrimony, and exalt celibacy as the most perfect state; for on this very occasion marriage is declared to be an institution of God; and lest any one might have replied, that it was a remedy contrived purely for the weakness of our fallen state, it is particularly observed that it was instituted at the time of man's innocence. Wherefore as the Apostle tells us, *Marriage is honourable in all ranks and conditions of persons, provided the duties thereof are inviolably maintained.* Besides, it is false to affirm that our Lord recommends celibacy; he only gives permission for it, as a thing not unlawful; telling them, that if they were able to live continently, they would not sin, though they did not marry; especially as the times they lived in were times of persecution. In this light also the judgment of the Apostle St. Paul is to be considered, 1 Cor. vii. 26. See Macknight, Wetstein, and Chemnitz.

Ver. 13. Then were there brought unto him little children.] *For of such is the kingdom of heaven;* i. e. as Dr. Doddridge paraphrases it, "Persons of such a character are the true subjects of my kingdom, and heirs of eternal glory, to which many little children are to be admitted into my church by baptism." See Mark x. 15. Luke xviii. 7. "I acknowledge, says this candid and sensible writer, that these words will not of themselves prove *infant baptism* to be an institution of Christ; but if that appears from other Scriptures to be the case, there

there will be proportionable reason to believe, that our Lord might here intend some reference to it."

Ver. 15. And he laid his hand on them, &c.] Though the little ones could not profit by our Saviour's instruction, yet being capable of his good wishes, St. Mark tells us, ch. x. 16. *He took them up in his arms, and, with his usual benevolence, blessed them.* The imposition of hands being always accompanied with prayer, as we observed, St. Matthew, who, in the beginning of his account, had joined these two together, says simply at the conclusion, that *He laid his hands on them, and departed.* It is probable therefore that Jesus both recommended the young ones to God in prayer, and blessed them himself.

Ver. 16. Behold, one came, and said] For the explanation of this event, see the notes on Mark x. 17, &c. where it is more circumstantially related.

Ver. 17. There is none good but one, that is God] This passage has been produced and strongly urged by the Arians in favour of their system. They found their argument upon the Greek, which runs thus: Οὐδεὶς ἐστὶν ἀγαθός, εἰ μὴ εἷς, ὁ Θεός. *There is none good but εἷς, one; and that (one) is, ὁ Θεός, God.* Whence it is urged, that the adjective εἷς being in the masculine gender, cannot be interpreted to signify *one being*, or *nature* (for then it should have been *οὗ* in the neuter) but *one person*; so that by confining the attribute of goodness to the single person of the *Father*, it must of course exclude the person of the *Son* and *Holy Ghost* from the unity of the *Godhead*. And it happens, that the same Greek, word for word, occurs in Mark ii. 7. *Who can forgive sins,*—εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ Θεός, *but God only?* So it is rendered by our translators; and we have a plain

plain matter of fact, that *εις* in this place cannot possibly admit the sense of *one person*, because Christ, who is *another person*, took upon him to *forgive sins*. In the parallel of St. Luke's Gospel (ch. v. 21.) the expression is varied, so as to make it still clearer,—*ει μὴ μόνος ὁ Θεός*,—not *εις*, but *μόνος*, another adjective of the masculine gender, which, though it agree with its substantive *Θεός*, is rightly construed with an *adverb*,—either the *alone God*, or *God only*: and the Greek itself uses one for the other indifferently, as *ἐπ' ἄρτω μόνω*, *by bread only*, Matth. iv. 4. *ἐν λόγῳ μόνον* *in word only*. 1 Thess. i. 5. The utmost that can be gathered therefore from these words, is no more than this, that there is *one God* (in which we are all agreed) and that there is *none good* beside him, which nobody will dispute. Whether in this *God* there be *one person* or *three*, remains yet to be considered; and the Scripture is so express in other places, as to settle it beyond all dispute. If it should here be asked, for what reason Christ put the question before us, *Why callest thou me good?* I answer, For the same reason that he asked the Pharisees, *Why David in Spirit called him LORD*, ch. xxii. 43. and that was, to try if they were able to account for it. This *young man*, by addressing our Saviour under the name of *good master*, when the Psalmist had affirmed long before, that *there is none that doeth good*, *no NOT ONE*, (Ps. xiv. 3.) did in effect allow him to be *God*; no mere man since the fall of *Adam*, having any claim to that character; and when he was called upon to explain his meaning, for that *God only was good*, he should have replied in the words of *St. Thomas*, *My Lord, and my God!* which would have been a noble instance of faith, and

and have cleared up the whole difficulty. See Jones's "Catholic Doctrine of Trinity," p. 13.

Ver. 21. If thou wilt be perfect, &c.] That is, "If thou wilt prove thyself a true disciple of mine; if thou wilt enter perfectly and unfeignedly under my banner, and enlist in my cause." It may not be improper to observe, that the terms of salvation here settled are not different from those mentioned elsewhere in Scripture: for though faith is declared by our Lord himself to be the condition of salvation, it is such a faith, as either proceeds from or influences to the universal righteousness here described;—If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandment. Moreover, the Christian religion being from God, is established upon such solid evidences that every virtuous person to whom it is offered will receive it with pleasure; and if any man refuse it, his infidelity can be owing to no other cause than this, that his deeds are evil. So our Lord himself says expressly, John iii. 19. and therefore in returning a general answer concerning the terms of salvation, Jesus fitly directed this young man first of all to a sincere, constant and universal obedience; and when he replied that he had arrived at that already, and desired to know if he lacked any thing more,—namely, to render him perfectly good, Our Lord, who knew that he was not thoroughly tinctured with the principles of virtue, required him to become his disciple; which, as he had acknowledged his divine mission, he could not refuse to do, if he was the man he pretended to be. At the same time he let him know, that he could not be *perfect*, or his disciple, and much less a preacher of the Gospel, without renouncing worldly possessions; because, as matters then stood, the very profession of his religion, and much more

the preaching of it, would infallibly expose him to the loss of his estate. Here therefore our Lord has declared, that all men to whom the Gospel is offered, must believe it, and make profession of it, else they cannot be saved; and that true virtue wherever it subsists, necessarily leads men to this belief and profession: but he by no means says, that it is absolutely necessary for all Christians to sell their goods and give them to the poor. An entire renunciation of the world indeed was necessary in the first ages, when the profession of Christianity, but especially the preaching of it, exposed men to persecution and death; which was the reason that Jesus mentioned it to the young man as his indispensable duty, especially as he aimed at the highest degree of goodness: But now that the Christian religion is established by law in many countries, all that our master requires of us is, that we be in constant and habitual readiness to part with the world; and that we actually do so with acquiescence in God's good pleasure, when he in his providence calls thereto. See on Luke xiv. 33. Mac-knight and Law's Christian perfection, chap. 3.

Ver. 24. It is easier for a camel, &c.] A cable. Wat. See Boch. tom. i. p. 22. Vorst. Adag. p. 14. there is certainly much more propriety in the metaphor, rendered agreeably to Dr. Waterland's interpretation; but as there is nothing in the proverbial expression, as it stands in the common versions, but what is very agreeable to the eastern taste and may be paralleled in other Jewish writings, there seems no great reason to depart from it. The Jews generally made use of the phrase, An elephant cannot pass through the eye of a needle; which our Saviour changes for a *camel*, an animal very common in Syria, and whose bunch

on its back is apt to hinder its passage through any low entrance. In our Saviour's time too the word *camel* was proverbially used to express any vast object, that being the largest animal in Palestine. Thus we read, ch. xxiii. 24. *Strain out a gnat, and swallow a camel.* We may just observe, that these strong expressions must be understood in their strictest sense of the state of things at that time subsisting; yet in some degree they are applicable to rich men in all ages: The reason is, riches have a woeful effect upon piety in two respects: *first*, in the *acquisition*; for, not to mention the many frauds and other sins which men commit to obtain riches,—they occasion an endless variety of cares and anxieties, which draw the affection away from God. *Secondly*, they are offensive to piety in the possession, because if they are hoarded, they never fail to beget covetousness, which is the root of all evil; and if they are enjoyed they become strong temptations to luxury and drunkenness, to lust, pride and idleness. See Heylin and Mintert on the word *καμηλο*.

Ver. 28. Ye which have followed, &c.] Ye who have followed me, shall, in the regeneration, when the son of man shall sit upon, &c.—sit even ye also upon. &c. Wat. with whom Dr. Doddridge, and the version of 1729 agree. The latter has the passage thus: *In the new age when the son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye that have followed me shall likewise sit upon twelve thrones, &c.* See Rev. xxi. 5. This appears to be a very natural sense of this difficult passage: many commentators, however, understand it differently, and agreeably to our translation. “Jesus replied (says Macknight) to the inquiry of Peter, that he and the rest of the Apostles should certainly have a peculiar

cular reward even in this life; because, immediately after his resurrection, when he ascended the throne of his mediatorial kingdom, he would advance them to the high honour of *judging the twelve tribes of Israel*; i. e. of ruling his *church and people*, of which the twelve tribes were a type. In the Hebrew language, *to judge* signifies *to rule or govern*. See Judg. xii. 7. 1 Sam. viii. 5. wherefore by the Apostles sitting on the thrones judging the tribes, may be understood their ruling the Christian church, of which the Jewish was a type, by the laws of the Gospel which their master inspired them to preach, and by the infallible decisions relative to faith and manners which he enabled them to give in all difficult cases. Such seems to have been the true nature of the dignity which Jesus now promised to his Apostles.

Ver. 29. And every one that hath forsaken, &c.] Our Saviour speaks next of the rewards which his other disciples should receive, both in this life, and in that which is to come. See Mark x. 30. where the promise is more fully expressed. Wetstein observes that the event confirmed the prediction. For one *House* the first preachers of the Gospel found an hospitable reception in almost every part of the earth; for a few *brethren and sisters*, an innumerable multitude of true believers; for *children*, all those whom they had converted to the Christian faith; for *lands*, all the goods of the Christians, which were in common; and in fine, for *this life, life eternal*. *They shall receive an hundred fold*, *κα- τοντοπλασίονα*: That is, says one, "They shall have abundantly more and greater blessings than they part with;—a full content of mind, the comforts of an upright conscience, the joys of the Holy Ghost, increase of Grace, hopes of Glory; they shall

shall have God for their *father*, Christ for their *spouse*, and all good Christians for their *brethren*.

CHAP. XX.

Ver. 1. For the kingdom of heaven, &c.] The true scope of this parable is to shew, that the Jewish nation, who of all people were first in external privileges, and particularly in respect of the offer of the Gospel be last in accepting it; and that when they did receive it, they should enjoy no higher privileges under that dispensation, than the Gentiles, who were called at the eleventh hour.

Ver. 3—7. He went out about the third hour, &c.] The hiring of labourers at the subsequent third, sixth, and ninth hours, signifies the various interpositions of Providence, by which many of the Gentiles in the different ages of the world were converted, either in whole or in part, to the knowledge and worship of the true God; becoming some *profelytes of righteousness*, others *profelytes of the gate*. The invitation given at the eleventh hour signifies God's calling the Gentiles, in every country, by the light of nature, to live piously and wisely. The word *δικαιον*, ver. 4. rendered *right*, signifies not only what a person may legally claim, but what he might equitably expect from a person of honour and humanity; whatsoever is reasonable. See Macknight, and Doddridge. The word *αργους*, rendered *idle*, ver. 6. should rather be rendered *unemployed*; for they were willing to work.

Ver. 8—9. Call the labourers, &c.] The equal reward bestowed on all,—the *penny* given to each labourer as his wages, signifies the Gospel, with its privileges and advantages, which they all enjoyed

on an equal footing. The *steward* who called the labourers to receive this reward, represents the Apostles and first preachers, by whom the Gospel was offered both to Jews and Gentiles; and the rewards being first bestowed on the labourers who came at the eleventh hour, signifies, that the idolatrous Gentiles and profelytes should all enjoy the Gospel, with its privileges, before the Jewish nation was converted, the condition not of a few individuals, but of great bodies of men being represented in the parable.

Ver. 13—15. Friend, I do thee no wrong] “ Seeing I have given thee the hire which I promised thee, thou hast no reason of complaint; and if I choose to give unto those who came last into the vineyard as much hire as I have given to thee, who can find fault with it? I own it is an act of generosity; but am I not free to bestow what is mine own as I see proper? *Is thine eye evil because I am good?* Because I am *liberal* and *bountiful*, art thou *envious* and *covetous*?” A malignant aspect is generally the attendant of a selfish envious temper, which was very characteristic of the Jews: this part of the parable, therefore, is a striking representation of God’s goodness, in bestowing upon the Gentiles the Gospel dispensation in preference to the Jews themselves, and without subjecting them to the grievous burden of the Mosaic yoke. In ver. 14. *Αγορ το σον*, might be rendered, *take up that is thine*; and implies that they not only murmured, but in their passion threw down upon the ground the money they had received.

Ver. 17. And Jesus going up to Jerusalem] See the note on Mark x. 32.

Ver. 18. Shall be betrayed unto the chief priests] This prediction being built upon the ancient prophecies

cies concerning the Messiah, certainly contained matter of great encouragement to the disciples, had they understood and applied it in a proper manner; and it is a remarkable proof of the prophetic spirit which dwelt in Christ; for, humanly speaking, it was much more probable that he should have been *privately assassinated*, or *stoned*, as was once attempted, by some zealous transport of popular fury, than that he should have been thus solemnly condemned, and delivered up to *crucifixion*; a Roman punishment, with which we do not find he had ever been threatened. Indeed, when the Jews condemned him for blasphemy, for which the punishment appointed in the law was *stoning*, and Pilate at last gave them a general permission to *take him, and judge him according to their own law*, (Matth. xxvi. 65, 66. John xviii. 31. xix. 7.) it is wonderful they did not choose to *stone* him. But *all this was done, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled*. Compare Matth. xxvi. 50. and John xix. 36.

Ver. 20, 21. Then came to him, &c.] Our Saviour's predictions respecting his sufferings were either not understood by his disciples, or at least they apprehended that whatever difficulties lay in the way, those sufferings would certainly end in his triumph and glory. Ever since Christ's transfiguration the two brothers had conceived very high notions of the glory of his kingdom, and, it may be, of their own merit also, because they had been admitted to behold that miracle. They formed the project, therefore, of securing to themselves the chief places by his particular promise, and embraced this as a fit opportunity of accomplishing their purpose.

Ver. 22. Ye know not what ye ask] "You are ignorant of the nature of the honour you are asking:

ing: However, since you desire to partake with me in my glory, I would know if you be willing to share with me in my sufferings, for the sake of the Gospel." Insinuating that the road to greatness in his kingdom lies through the depth of affliction and persecution on account of truth. Hence *cup* came in general to signify a *portion* assigned, whether of pleasure or sorrow; and many instances occur in which it refers to the latter. See ch. xxyi. 39, 42.

Ver. 23. And be baptised with the baptism] That is, "Shall partake of my afflictions." This metamorphical sense of the word *baptism*, is derived from the figurative expressions of the Old Testament, in which afflictions are represented under the notion of great waters passing over, and being ready to overwhelm a person. In this view of the matter James and John were *baptised with Christ's baptism*; for James was put to death by Herod, Acts xii. 2. being the first of all the apostles who suffered martyrdom for Christ; and though the account which some gave of John's being cast into a cauldron of boiling oil at Rome, has been called into question by many, it is not to be doubted that he had his share in the persecutions, from which none of Christ's Apostles were exempt. He was imprisoned and scourged by order of the council at Jerusalem, Acts v. 18, 40. and *banished to the Isle of Patmos for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ,* Rev. i. 9. The last clause of this verse, *is not mine to give, &c.* should be translated, *is not mine to give, unless to them for whom it is prepared, &c.* *Αρρα* being put here for *αυτην*, as it is Mark ix. 8. see also chap. xvii. 8. Our Saviour meant that it was not in his power to give the chief places to any, but to those who were most eminent for their graces, particularly for their faith and fortitude;

titude ; such only having a right to the chief places in the kingdom of heaven, according to the unalterable laws of the divine administration. "I can give the chief places in my kingdom to none, but to those, who, according to the immutable laws of my Father, are capable of enjoying them."

Ver. 25. The princes of the Gentiles] Jesus solicitous to cure that pride which made some of his disciples ambitious, and others jealous, called them unto him, and told them that his kingdom was not, as they imagined, of the same nature with the kingdoms of the world ; and that the greatness of his disciples, was not the greatness of secular princes which consists in reigning over others with absolute and despotic sway. See Grotius, and L'Enfant.

Ver. 28. Even as the Son of man] "The greatness of my disciples consists in doing men all the good they possibly can, by a continual course of humble laborious services, in imitation of me your master, whose greatness consists not in being ministered to by men, but in ministering to them as a servant ; by healing the sick, feeding the hungry, instructing the ignorant, and laying down my life a ransom for the sins of many." This being the highest dignity in Christ's kingdom, he might well tell the two brothers, that they did not know what they were asking, when they begged the honour of filling the highest stations in it.

Ver. 29. And as they departed, &c.] *And as they went out of Jericho.* Wat. and MSS. St. Luke says, that the blind man was cured as our Lord drew nigh to Jericho, ch. xviii. 35. and before he passed through the town, ch. xix. 1. The other Evangelists say, the miracle was performed as he departed from Jericho. But their accounts may be reconciled.

reconciled. The solution of the difficulty is this: Jericho having been a flourishing city before the Israelites entered Canaan, must, in the course of so many ages, have undergone various changes, from war and other accidents; we may therefore suppose that it consisted of an old and a new town, situated at a little distance from each other. On this supposition, the beggars sitting on the road between the two towns, might be said to have gained their cure either as Jesus departed from the one, or drew nigh to the other, according to the pleasure of the historians. The reader, however, must not look upon this as a mere supposition; for, on examination, he will find clear proof of it in the Sacred History. We are told (Josh. vi. 24, 26.) that after the Israelites had burned Jericho, Joshua, their general, interdicted by a curse the rebuilding of it. His curse struck such terror into the Israelites, that for the space of five hundred years no man attempted to rebuild Jericho, till Hiel the Bethelite, in the days of Ahab, brought it upon himself, by venturing to raise the old city out of her ashes; 1 Kings xv. 34. But though the old city thus continued in ruins for many ages, there was a town very soon built not far from it, to which they gave its name: for so early as Eglon's time we read of *the city of Palm-trees*, Judg. iii. 13. a name peculiar to Jericho on account of the fine palm-trees with which it was environed. Deut. xxxiv. 3. 2 Chron. xxviii. 15. Besides, we find Jericho, some time after this, expressly mentioned by name, it being the town where David ordered his messengers to tarry till their beards, which Hanun king of Moab caused to be shaved, were grown. Wherefore, as there was a *Jericho* before Hiel rebuilt the ancient

ancient town, which Joshua destroyed, it cannot, I think, be doubted, that from Hiel's days there were two cities of this name, at no great distance from each other; perhaps a mile or so. Besides, Josephus insinuates, that both of them subsisted in his time; expressly declaring, "that the spring which watered the territory of Jericho arose near the old town." See Bell. Jud. v. 4. Thus therefore we have an easy and perfect reconciliation of the seemingly contradictory accounts which the Evangelists have given of our Lord's miracle on the blind men in this part of the country. But although there had been no hint in antiquity, directing us to believe that there were two cities of the name of Jericho, not far from each other, every reader must acknowledge, that to have supposed this, would have been sufficient to our purpose of reconciling the Evangelists, because there are such towns to be met with in every country; a thing which of itself must have rendered the supposition not only possible, but probable; and I may venture to say, that had two profane historians related any fact with the disagreeing circumstances found in the Evangelists, the critics would have thought them good reasons for such a supposition, especially if the historians were writers of character, and had been either eye-witnesses of the things which they related, or informed by the eye-witnesses of them. To conclude, this instance may teach us never to despair of finding a proper and full solution of any imagined inconsistency that is to be met with in the Sacred History.

Ver. 30. And behold, two blind men] St. Mark and St. Luke speak only of *one blind man* who was cured near Jericho. St. Agustin is of opinion, that

that one of these was more remarkable than the other, being the *son of Timeus*, who seems to have been a person of some distinction, and that having fallen into poverty and blindness, he was forced to beg for his bread. He thinks this a good reason for his being mentioned particularly by one of the Evangelists. It may be added, that he might himself be remarkable by the extraordinary earnestness with which he cried. See Aug. de Consen. Evang. l. 2. the note on ch. viii. 28. and sermon ix. vol. i. of my discourses on the *miracles*.

Ver. 32. Jesus—said, what will ye, &c.] It is observable that we never find Jesus bestowing an alms of money on any poor person falling in his way; yet this is no objection against his charity: for if the person who addressed him was incapable of working for his own subsistence by reason of bodily infirmity, it was much more noble, and much more becoming the dignity of the Son of God to remove the infirmity, and put the beggar in a condition of supporting himself, than by the gift of a small sum to relieve only a present want, which would soon return; such an alms being at best but a trifling and indirect method of helping them. On the other hand, if the beggars who applied to him were not in real distress through want or disease, but under the pretence of infirmity or poverty followed begging, as they deserved no encouragement, so they met with none from Jesus, who knew perfectly the circumstances of every particular person with whom he conversed. Besides, to have bestowed money on the poor was not only beneath Christ's dignity, but having occasion to perform great cures on several beggars, it might have afforded his enemies a plausible pretence for affirming, that he bribed such as feigned diseases, to feign

feign cures likewise, of which they gave him the honour. See Macknight.

REFLECTIONS ON CHAP. XX.

The motion of the two disciples was not more full of infirmity than their answer :—*We are able* ; out of an eager desire of the honour, they are apt to undertake the condition. The best men may be mistaken in their own powers ; alas, how striking an instance have we in the case of our Lord's followers : when it came to the issue, *They all forsook him, and fled*. It is one thing to suffer in speculation, another in practice. There cannot be a worse sign than for a man in a carnal presumption to vaunt of his own abilities ; how justly doth God suffer that man to be foiled purposely, that he may be ashamed of his own self-confidence ? O God, let me ever be humbly dejected in the sense of mine own insufficiency ; let me give all the glory to thee, and take nothing to myself but my infirmities.

CH A P XXI.

Ver. 1. And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem] The *multitude* which attended our Lord in this journey, ch. xx. 29. having increased prodigiously as he advanced towards Jerusalem, He did not now shun them, and enter the city privately, as he had always done on former occasions. The people were to honour him with the title of the Messiah publicly, that he might have an opportunity of accepting
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that august name in the most avowed manner, before he ascended into heaven. Moreover, the priests who had issued out a proclamation against him, John xi. 57. were to be awed, at least for a while, and restrained from offering him violence; for, as he had doctrines to teach, rebukes to give, and other things to do, which could not fail to incense those proud rulers; without doubt they would have put him to death prematurely, had not the people appeared on his side. Accordingly, after the parable of the husbandman was spoken, ver. 44. *the priests sought to lay hands on him, but feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.*

Ver. 8, 9. And a very great multitude spread their garments] When the multitudes saw Jesus mounted, they immediately bethought themselves of shewing him the honours which kings and conquerors obtained in their triumphal entries; for, as they all firmly believed that he would take the reins of government into his own hands at this passover, they had a mind to make his entry into Jerusalem have the air of a triumph.

Ver. 13. But ye have made it a den of thieves] The Jews, reckoning the lower and outer court of the temple as a place of no sanctity, because it was designed for accommodating the Gentile proselytes in their worship, not only kept the daily market there, of such things as were necessary in offering sacrifices, but suffered the common porters, in going from one part of the city to another, to pass through it with their burdens, for the sake of shortening their way: But as these abuses occasioned great disturbance to the proselytes, Jesus reformed them a second time, see John ii. 14. telling the people around him that the Gentiles worshipped there

there by divine appointment, as well as the Jews; the temple being ordained of God to be *the house of prayer for all nations*, Mark xi. 17.

Ver. 14—16. And the blind and the lame came to him, &c.] There seems a peculiar propriety in our Lord's multiplying these astonishing miracles, both to vindicate the extraordinary act of authority which he had just been performing, and to make this his last visit to Jerusalem as convincing as possible, that those who would not submit to him, might be left so much the more inexcusable. Upon this occasion the very children, when they saw the cures which he performed, proclaimed him *the Son of David*; so wonderfully were they struck with his miracles.

Ver. 18—22. Now in the morning, &c.] I shall postpone the remarks on this miracle to Mark xi. as it is there related with some circumstances which require particular notice.

Ver. 23—26. And when he was come, &c.] The rulers, much alarmed at the proceedings of Jesus, were very desirous of putting him to death; but they wished to do it under the pretext of law. See ver. 46. and Mark xi. 18. In consequence of their intentions to do so, the chief priests, scribes, and elders, i. e. some of the first men of the nation, came by appointment of the Sanhedrim to Jesus, as he was teaching in the temple, and before all the people put two questions to him. The *first* was, concerning the nature of the authority by which he acted, whether as a prophet, a priest, or a king, no other person having a right to make any reformation in the church or state. The *second question* was, that if he claimed the authority of any, or all of those characters, they desired to

know from whom he derived it, ver. 23. Jesus, that he might at once reprove the impropriety of the question in those circumstances, and, in fact, return an unexceptionable, though oblique answer to it, said to them in reply, *I also will ask, &c.* ver. 24, 25. This question reduced the priests to an inextricable dilemma. They considered, on the one hand, that if they should acknowledge John's mission to be from God, it would oblige them to acknowledge Christ's authority; John having more than once borne testimony to him as the Messiah. On the other hand, if they denied John's authority, they did not know but the people who stood round them listening to Jesus might stone them, for they generally believed John to have been a prophet: many of them had submitted to his baptism, and his reputation by no means ended with his life. "Ye are come, said he, to enquire into the proofs of my mission. I agree to submit myself to your examination, on condition that you will tell me what your determination was concerning *John*. Was he a true, or a false prophet? You say, *you cannot tell*. If then you are not able to form a judgment concerning John, how can you take upon you to judge of me?"

Ver. 28—30. But what think you? a certain man, &c.] Because the chief priests and elders had said that they did not know from whence John's baptism was, Jesus sharply rebuked them for disbelieving him: He conveyed his reproof under the parable of two sons, who were commanded to work in their father's vineyard; and by asking their opinion of the behaviour of these sons, he made them condemn themselves. See on ch. xiii. 3. The temper and behaviour of the second son, was an exact picture of the temper and behaviour of the Pharisees;

Pharisees; for in their prayers and phrases, they gave God the most honourable titles, and professed the utmost zeal to serve him; but at the same time would do no part of the work which he enjoined them, and particularly would not hearken to the Baptist's exhortation. In the character of the other son, the disposition of the tax-gatherers and harlots is well described. They neither professed nor promised to do the will of God; yet, when they came to think seriously, they submitted themselves first to John, then to Christ, and in consequence of their faith amended their lives.

Ver. 31, 32. They say unto him the first] The moral reflection suggested by this passage of the history is, that the openly profane are more apt to repent than hypocrites; which experience also shews to be true. The reason is, persons only profane have nothing by which they can defend themselves against the terrors of God, when once they begin to fasten upon their conferences. Whereas hypocrites, having a form of godliness, screen themselves therewith from all the attacks that can be made upon them by the strongest arguments, drawn whether from reason, or from the word of God. See as above.

Ver. 33. Hear another parable.] Not satisfied with shewing the rulers the heinousness of their sin, in rejecting the Baptist, Jesus judged it proper likewise publicly to represent the crime of the nation, in rejecting all the messengers of God, from first to last; and among the rest, his only begotten son; and disapproving the Mosaical dispensation under which they lived: At the same time he warned them plainly of their danger, by reason of the punishment which they incurred on account of

such a continued course of rebellion. The outward œconomy of religion, in which they gloried, was to be taken from them; their relation to God, as his people, cancelled; and their national constitution destroyed: But, because these were topics extremely disagreeable, he couched them under the veil of a parable, which he formed upon one made use of long before by the Prophet Isaiah, ch. vi. 1. where see the notes. This *vineyard* with its appurtenances represents the Mosaical dispensation; a dispensation attended with great present advantages, and many promises of future blessing.

Ver. 40 — 42. When the Lord therefore—cometh] He shall become the *head of the corner, or of the church?* What else is this, but that he shall be believed on by the Gentiles, and unite them to the church of God, as an head corner-stone unites the two sides of a building?" Accordingly St. Luke expresses the connection of our Lord's answer with their denial more clearly, ch. xx. 17. See the note on Ps. cxviii. 16. Jeffrey's Review, p. 119. and Macknight.

Ver. 45. They perceived that he spoke of them] One would think they could have been at no loss for the interpretation of the parable, considering how nearly it resembled that in Isai. v. 1, &c. with which they were doubtless well acquainted: only it is to be observed, that there *Israel* is the *vineyard*; here the true religion is represented under that figure. Accordingly it is then threatened, that the vineyard should be let out to other husbandmen, each event suiting its connection. See Doddridge and Calmet.

CHAP. -XXII.

Ver. 1—2. And Jesus answered, &c.] The rulers being afraid to apprehend Jesus, he was at liberty to proceed in the duties of his ministry. According he delivered another parable, wherein he described, on one hand the bad success which the preaching of the Gospel was to have among the Jews, who for that reason were to be destroyed; and on the other, the chearful reception it was to meet with among the Gentiles, who thereupon were to be admitted into the church of God. *Marriage supper* or *great feast* signifies the Joys of heaven, (see Rev. xix. 9.) which are fitly compared to an elegant entertainment, on account of their exquisiteness, fulness and duration; and they are here said to be prepared *in honour of the Son of God*, because they are bestowed on men as the reward of his obedience. Our Lord is frequently represented in Scripture under the character of a *bridegroom*. See ch. ix. 15. Luke v. 34. John iii. 29. the notes on Luke xiv. 16, &c. Mac-knight and Wolfius.

Ver. 4. Again he sent forth other servants] After Christ's resurrection and ascension, the Apostles were sent to inform the Jews, that the Gospel covenant was established, mansions in heaven were prepared, and nothing was wanting, but that they should chearfully accept of the honour designed them.

Ver. 7. When the king heard thereof, he was wroth] This branch of the parable plainly predicted the destruction of the Jews by the Roman armies, called *God's armies*, because they were appointed by him to execute vengeance upon that once favourite, but now rebellious people.

Ver.

Ver. 11. He saw there a man, &c.] That is, says Dr. Clarke, "One, who making profession of the Christian religion, practises not the virtues of a Christian life." Without all doubt, the man that was sentenced to be bound and cast out of doors; had been offered a wedding garment, or sumptuous apparel, along with the rest, but would not receive it; and so haughtily came in, dirty and ragged as he was.

Ver. 14. For many are called, &c.] "These words are proverbial, and must be referred *first* to the *Jews* who though they were *called in great numbers* by the preaching of the Gospel, *few were chosen*; for they did not believe. See on chap. xx.

16. They must be referred also to the *Gentiles*, who though they embraced the Gospel, many of them rejected the wedding garment when it was offered to them, and refused the gracious assistance of God's good Spirit to perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord. The parable is concluded in this manner, to shew us, that the profession of the Christian religion will not save a man, unless he lives in a manner worthy of that religion; that not they *who say Lord, Lord!* but *they who do the will of that Lord*, shall enter into the joys of his kingdom. See the Reflections.

Ver. 16. With the Herodians.] They seem to have been men who distinguished themselves by their zeal for the family of Herod; and on that account, they would be naturally zealous for the authority of the Romans, by whose means Herod was made and continued king; and it is probable as Dr. Prideaux conjectures, that they might incline to conform to them in some particulars, which the law would not allow of; and especially in the admission of images, though not in the religious, or rather

rather idolatrous use of them. Herod's attempt to set up a *golden eagle* over the eastern gate of the temple, is well known: These complaisant courtiers would, no doubt, defend it; and the same temper might discover itself in many other instances. On all these accounts, they were most diametrically opposite to the Pharisees; so that the conjunction of their counsels against Christ is a very memorable proof of the keanness of that malice, which could thus cause them to forget so deep a quarrel with each other. Thus united, they resolved to send certain of their disciples to *ensnare Jesus in his words*; whom they directed to *feign themselves just men*, Luke xx. 20. men who had a great veneration for the divine law, and a dread of doing any thing inconsistent therewith; and under that mask to beg him, for the ease of their consciences to give his opinion whether they might pay taxes to the Romans, consistently with their regard for their religion. It seems this question was much debated in our Lord's time. One Judas of Galilee having taught the unlawfulness of paying the taxes, and gathered a numerous faction, especially among the common people. The priests, therefore, imagined that it was not in our Lord's power to decide the point, without making himself obnoxious to some of the parties, who, divided upon it. If he should say it was *lawful to pay* the taxes, they believed that the people, in whose hearing the question was proposed, (see Luke xx. 26.) would be incensed against him, not only as a base pretender, who, on being attacked publicly, renounced the character of the Messiah, which he had assumed among his friends, but as a flatterer of princes only, and a betrayer of the liberties of his country; one who taught doctrines inconsistent with

with the known principles of the people of God. For, the notion which the generality of the Jews formed of the Messiah was, that he would deliver them from foreign servitude : If therefore he who called himself the Messiah, recommended the paying of taxes to the Romans, they could not but think this inconsistent with his pretensions, nay, and an entire renunciation of them. But, if he should affirm that it was *unlawful* to pay, the Herodians resolved to inform the governor of it, who they hoped should punish him as a fomentor of sedition. Highly elated, therefore, with their project, they came and proposed their question, after having first passed an encomium on the truth of his mission, and upon his courage, integrity, and impartiality, with a design, no doubt, to make him believe that they were his friends, and that he ought boldly to declare what the will of God was in this matter. See L'Enfant, Prideaux, Mac-knight, and Calmet.

Ver. 18—21. Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites ?] The Jews were so tenacious of the customs of their country, and had so high an opinion of their own holiness, that they would not make use of heathen money, as appears from the business of the money-changers mentioned in the Gospels. Probably it was for this reason that the Romans insisted on having the taxes paid in their own coin, by making it current, they taught the Jews that they were their masters. Hence the force of our Lord's argument appears : " Since this money bears Cæsar's image, it is his ; and by making use of it, ye acknowledge his authority. If so, I leave it to yourselves to judge, whether tribute ought to be paid toward the support of that government which ye have acknowledged,

ledged, which ye cannot shake off, and by which your tranquility is preserved."

Ver. 22. They marvelled, and left him] The unexpected and very wise answer of our Lord, in which he clearly confuted them on their own principles, and shewed that the rights of God and the magistrate do not interfere in the least, because magistrates are God's deputies, and rule by his authority, quite disconcerted and silenced his crafty enemies.

Ver. 23. The same day came to him the Sadducees] It is generally known that Sadoc, the master of this sect, and from whom the Sadducees took their name, thought that God was not to be served from mercenary principles; *i. e.* as he crudely explained it, from the hope of reward, or fear of punishment. His followers interpreted this as an implicit denial of a future state, and so imbibed that pernicious notion of the utter destruction of the soul at death;—equally uncomfortable and absurd. The story which they mention here seems to have been a kind of common-place objection, as we meet with it in the old Jewish writers.

Ver. 24—28. Master, Moses said, &c.] The argument by which the Sadducees endeavoured to confute the notion of a future state, was taken from the Jewish law of marriage; which, to give their objection the better colour, they observed was God's law delivered by Moses. As they believed the soul to be nothing but a more refined kind of matter, they thought if there was any future state it must resemble the present.

Ver. 29, 30. Jesus answered and said] Jesus confuted their argument, by telling the Sadducees that they were ignorant of the power of God, who

who has created spirit as well as matter, and who can make man completely happy in the enjoyment of himself.

Ver. 31, 32. But as touching, &c.] Our Lord having demonstrated that the Sadducees were ignorant of the *power of God*, proceeded to shew that they were ignorant of the Scriptures likewise; and particularly of the writings of Moses, from whence they had drawn their objection: For out of the law itself he demonstrated the certainty of a resurrection, at least of just men, and thereby quite overturned the opinion of the Sadducees, who, believing the materiality of the soul, affirmed that men were annihilated at death, and that the writings of Moses supported their opinion. His argument was this: "As a man cannot properly be a father without children, nor a king without subjects, so God cannot be properly called God, unless he has his people, and be Lord of the living. Since, therefore, in the law he calls himself the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, long after these patriarchs were dead, the relation denoted by the word *God* still subsisted between them; for which reason they were not annihilated, as the Sadducees pretended, when they affirmed they were dead, but were still in being, God's subjects, and covenanted people."

Ver. 35. Then—a lawyer asked, &c.] Some of the doctors declared, that the law of sacrifices was the great commandment, because sacrifices are both the expiations of sin, and thanksgivings for mercies. Others bestowed this honour on the law of circumcision, because it was the sign of the covenant established between God and the nation. A third part yielded it to the law of the sabbath, because by that appointment both the knowledge and the practice of the institutions of Moses were preserved; and, to name no more,
there

there were some who affirmed the law of meats and washings to be of the greatest importance, because thereby the people of God were effectually separated from the company and conversation of the heathens. But Jesus, with better reason, decided in favour of the beauties of piety and morality; mentioning particularly that comprehensive summary of both found in Deut. vi. 4. and which was one of the sentences written on their phylacteries. See Lightfoot's Hor. Heb. on Mark xii. 28.

Ver. 40. On these two commandments, &c.] The love of God, and the love of our neighbour, if carefully attended to, will grow into a complete system of religion. The duties of religion are all relative, regarding either God or man; and there is no relative duty that love does not readily transform itself into upon the mere view of the different circumstances of the person concerned. Love with regard to a superior, becomes honour and respect, and shews itself in a chearful obedience, and a willing submission. Love, with respect to equals, is friendship and benevolence; towards inferiors, it is courtesy and condescension: If it regards the happy and prosperous, it is joy and pleasure; if it looks towards the miserable, it is pity and compassion; it is a tenderness which will discover itself in all the acts of mercy and humanity. In negative duties this principle is no less effectual than in positive. Love will not permit us to injure, oppress, or offend our brother; it will not give us leave to neglect our betters, nor despise our inferiors; it will restrain every inordinate passion, and will not suffer us to gratify our envy at the expence of our neighbour's credit or reputation, but will preserve us harmless and innocent.

nocent. The same may be said of our *love to God*; for the duties which we owe to God are founded in the relation between God and us. Were there no such relation, the perfections of God might be matter of admiration, but could not be the ground of duty and obedience. I have observed that love naturally transforms itself into all relative duties which arise from the circumstances of the persons related. Thus, in the present case, if we love God, and consider him as the Lord and Governor of the World, our love will soon become obedience; if we consider him as wise, good, and gracious, our love will become honour and admiration; if we add to these our own weakness and infirmity, love will teach us dependance, and prompt us in all our wants to fly for refuge to our great protector; and thus in all other instances may the particular duties be drawn from this principle. Prayer and praise, and other parts of divine worship which are the acts of these duties, are so clearly connected with them, that there is no need of shewing distinctly concerning them, how they flow from this general commandment. See Bp. Sherlock as above, page 342, &c.

Ver. 42—45. What think ye of Christ?] The Pharisees having, in the course of our Lord's ministry, proposed sundry difficult questions to him, with a view to try his prophetic gifts, he, in his turn, now that a body of them was gathered together, thought fit to make trial of their skill in the sacred writings. For this purpose, he publicly asked their opinion of a difficulty concerning the Messiah's pedigree, arising from Ps. cx. The doctors, it seems, did not look for any thing in their Messiah more excellent than the most exacted perfections of human nature; for though they called him

him the Son of God had no notion that he was God, and so could offer no solution of the difficulty. Yet the latter question might have shewed them their error: for if the Messiah was to be only a secular prince as they supposed, ruling the men of his own time, he never could have been called *Lord* by persons who died before he was born; far less would so mighty a king as David, who also was his progenitor, have called him *Lord*. Wherefore, since he rules over, not the vulgar dead only of former ages, but even over the kings from whom he was himself descended and his kingdom comprehends the men of all countries and times, past, present, and to come. The doctors, if they thought accurately upon the subject, should have expected in their Messiah a king different from all other kings whatsoever. Besides, he is to *sit at God's right hand—till his enemies are made the footstool of his feet*; made thoroughly subject unto him. Numbers of Christ's enemies were subject to him in this life, and they who will not bow to him willingly, shall, like the rebellious subjects of other kingdoms, be reduced by punishment. Being constituted universal judge, all, whether friends and enemies, shall appear before his tribunal, where by the highest exercise of kingly power, he shall doom each to his unchangeable state. See Macknight. We may observe, that our Lord always takes it for granted, in his arguments with the Jews, that the writers of the Old Testament were under such an extraordinary guidance of the Holy Spirit, as to express themselves with the strictest propriety on all occasions; How then doth David in Spirit, &c. ? ver. 43. Comp. John x. 35. And I look upon this, says Dr. Doddridge as no contemptible argument for the inspiration of the New Testament; for we can never

think the Apostles of Christ to have been less assisted by the Divine Spirit in their writings, when they were in other respects so much more powerfully endued with it.

CHAP. XXIII.

Ver. 1, 2. Then spake Jesus, &c.] The name of *Pharisees* being the appellation of a sect, it cannot be supposed that our Lord meant to say of all the party, that *they sat in Moses' chair*; such a character was applicable to none but the doctors of the sect; for which reason we may suppose that the phrase *Scribes and Pharisees*, is an Hebraism for the *Pharisean Scribes*; some think there is an allusion, ver. 2. to those pulpits which Ezra made for the expounders of the law, Neh. viii. 4. and which were afterwards continued in the synagogue; from whence the rabbis delivered their discourses sitting.

Ver. 3. All therefore, &c.] The morality of Pharisees, as appears from many examples mentioned in the Gospel, was of a very loose kind, and as for the tradition which they taught, they often made void the law of God altogether. It is not therefore to be thought that Jesus would recommend the doctrines and precepts of the Pharisees without exception; and for this reason we must limit the general expressions here made use of, by what goes before in this discourse; thus, "While these men sit in Moses' seat, while they rightly explain the doctrines and precepts of the law, be sure to obey them; but by no means imitate their practices."

Ver.

Ver. 4. For they bind heavy burdens] It is well known that the Pharisees gloried in the exactness with which they obeyed the ceremonial part of the law. Nay, they carried matters so high, that, not content with the commandments which God had enjoined, they took upon them to prescribe a variety of traditionary precepts of their own invention.

Ver. 8—11. But be not ye called rabbi.] Further, the Jewish doctors were wont to inculcate on their disciples, that existence, except it was improved and ripened by knowledge, was in a manner no existence at all; and boasted that they who formed men's minds by erudition gave them a real being; and for that reason were to be considered as their true parents. Hence they arrogantly assumed to themselves the name of *father*, to intimate the peculiar obligation which their disciples, but especially the proselytes from idolatry, were under to them for their existence, and for the advantage which accompanied it: The title of *father* in this sense our Lord absolutely prohibited his Apostles either to take or give, because it belongs only to God; for *one is your father who is in heaven*.

Ver. 13. But woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites] The above discourse against the Scribes and Pharisees was pronounced in the hearing of many of the order; they were therefore greatly incensed, and watched for an opportunity to destroy Jesus: but it was not a time for him now to be afraid of them, this being the last sermon he was ever to preach in public. It was necessary to use violent remedies, especially as gentle medicines had hitherto proved ineffectual; wherefore, with a kind of severity he threatened them in the most awful and solemn manner, denouncing

dreadful woes against them, not on account of the personal injuries they had done him, although they were many, but on account of their excessive wickedness. They were public teachers of religion, who abused every mark and character of goodness to all the purposes of villainy. Under the grimace of a severe and sanctified air, they were malicious, implacable, lewd, covetous, and rapacious; in a word, instead of being reformers, they were corrupters of mankind; so that their wickedness being of the very worst sort, it deserved the sharpest rebuke that could be given. Our Lord pronounced *eight blessings* upon the mount; here he pronounced *eight woes*; not as imprecations, but solemn compassionate declarations of the misery which these stubborn sinners were bringing upon themselves. The reasons why these woes were denounced against the Scribes, are set forth in the subsequent verses, I. The *first* is, because they shut up the kingdom of heaven from men, by taking away the *key of knowledge*, (Luke xi. 52.) or the right interpretation of the ancient prophecies concerning the Messiah, by their example and authority; for they both rejected Jesus themselves and excommunicated those who believed in him: in short, by doing all they could to hinder the people from repenting of their sins and believing of the gospel. Dr. Moore, with great propriety, observes, that the word *hypocrites*, *ὑποκριται*, in its most exact application, signifies *players*, who, according to the unnatural custom of the ancients, acted a part under a mask. See his Theological Works, p. 293. Vitringa's Observ. Sacr. and the note on ch. vi. 16.

Ver. 14. For ye devour widow's houses] II. This verse contains the *second* reason of the woes; because they committed the grossest iniquities, being

ing covetous and rapacious under a cloak of religion; they *devoured the widow's houses*, and at the same time *made long prayers* in order to hide their villainy.

Ver. 15. Ye compass sea and land, &c.] III. The *third* woe is denounced, because they expressed the greatest zeal imaginable in making profelytes, compassing sea and land; *i. e.* using the most indefatigable pains and ardour, and leaving no art unpractised for that end; while at the same time their intention in all this, was not that the Gentiles might become better men through the knowledge of true religion, but more friendly to them; yield to them the direction of your purses, as well as of their consciences. Accordingly, in the heathen countries these worldlings accommodated religion to the humours of men; placing it not in the eternal and immutable rules of righteousness, but in ceremonial observances; the effect of which was, either that the profelytes became more superstitious, more immoral, and more presumptuous than their teachers; or that, taking them for impostors, they relapsed again into their old state of heathenism; and in both cases became two-fold more the *children of hell* than even of the Pharisees themselves; *i. e.* more openly and unlimitedly wicked than they. The zeal of the Jews in making profelytes was so remarkable, that it was taken notice of by the heathens, and turned into a proverb.

————— *Ac veluti te*
Judæi, cogamus in hanc concedere turbam.

HOR. Lib. i. Sat. 4.

Ver. 16. Ye blind guides] IV. The *fourth* woe is denounced for their false doctrine. Our Saviour had

had before stiled them *hypocrites* from their *personal character*, now he gives them another title, *blind guides*, respecting their influence upon others. Both these appellations are severely put together in ver. 23—25. and this severity rises to the height in the 33d verse. Our Saviour mentions particularly their doctrine concerning oaths, and declares in contradiction to their execrable tenets, that every oath is obligatory, the matter of which is lawful; because when men swear by the creature, if their oath has any meaning, it is an appeal to the Creator himself: In any other light, an oath by the creature is absolutely ridiculous, because the creature neither has knowledge with respect to the matter of the oath, nor power to punish the perjury. See on ch. v. 33. *It is nothing*, means, “it constitutes no obligation to tell the truth, or, to perform his vow.” And in like manner *he is guilty*, ver. 18. means, *he is bound by his oath*. The Pharisees taught, that oaths by the creature might be used on trifling occasions, and violated without any great guilt; but they excepted oaths by the *corban*, and by sacrifices: in which it is plain, that without any regard to common sense or decency, they were influenced merely by a view to their own interest, and therefore represented these to the people, as things of more eminent sanctity than even the temple or altar itself. The *gold of the temple* means the treasure kept in the temple, otherwise called *corban*. See ch. xxvii. 6.

Ver. 17—22. Ye fools and blind] The Apostle’s word, Heb. vi. 16. are a proper comment on the 17th verse, *for men verily swear by the greater. Whoso shall swear by the altar*, says our Saviour (ver. 20.) *sweareth by it, and by things thereon*; consequently the oath is an invocation of His wrath, to whom

whom the altar, and the gifts on the altar, are sacred, in case of falshood or breach of vows. The particular species of wrath invoked in this oath, is God's rejecting the swearer's sacrifice, and denying him the pardon of sin.—He adds, ver. 21. *Whofo shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein*; consequently the oath is a solemn wishing that he who dwelleth in the temple may hinder the person from ever worshipping there, if he is telling a falshood, or neglects his vow. And lastly, ver. 22. *He that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, &c.* and therefore his oath is a solemn wishing, that God who dwells in heaven may exclude him from the blessed place for ever, if he falsifies his oath.

Ver. 23, 24. Ye pay tithe, &c.] V. The *fifth* woe is denounced for their superstition. They observed the ceremonial precepts of the law with all possible exactness, while they utterly neglected the eternal, immutable, and indispenfible rules of righteousness,—*justice, mercy, or charity, and fidelity*. Besides the reproof of their superstition in the performances of positive duties, our Saviour condemned it also in the obedience which they gave to the negative precepts of the law; for there likewise this evil root shewed itself, ver. 24. *Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat,—or rather, who strain out a gnat, (namely, from your drink,) and swallow a camel*. The expression is proverbial, and was made use of by our Lord on this occasion to signify, that the Pharisees pretended to be exceedingly afraid of the smallest faults, as if sin had been bitter to them like death, while they indulged the grossest immoralities. Serratus observes, that in those hot countries gnats were apt to fall into wine, if it were not carefully covered; and passing the

the liquor through a *strainer*, that no gnat or part of one might remain, grew into a proverb for exactness about little matters. See on chap. xix. 24.

Ver. 25, 26. You make clean the outside, &c.] VI. The *sixth* woe is denounced for their hypocrisy: They were at pains to appear virtuous, and to have a decent external conduct, while they neglected to beautify their inward man with goodness, which, in the sight of God is an ornament of great price, and renders men dear and valuable to all who know them.

Ver. 27, 28. Ye are like unto whited sepulchres.] VII. The *seventh* woe is denounced for the excess of their hypocrisy. By their care of external appearances, the Pharisees and Scribes made a fair shew, and deceived the simple. Like fine whited sepulchres, they looked beautiful without, but within were full of uncleanness, and defiled every one that touched them! This was a severe rebuke to men, who would not keep company with publicans and sinners, for fear they should have been polluted by them. The truth is, these hypocrites were publicly decent, but privately dissolute: they put on a saint-like look, but in reality were the very worst of men. Mr. L'Enfant observes, that the Jews used to paint or whiten their sepulchres or tombs, at certain seasons of the year; that people might discern they were polluted places.

Ver. 29—31. Ye build the tombs. &c.] VIII. The *eighth* woe is denounced, because by the pains they took in adorning the sepulchres of the prophets, they pretended a great veneration for their memory; and as often as they happened to be mentioned, condemned their fathers, who had killed them; declaring, that if they had lived in the days
of

of their fathers, they would have opposed their wickedness; while in the mean time they still cherished the spirit of their fathers, persecuting the messengers of God, and particularly his divine Son, on whose destruction they were resolutely bent. The meaning of the 31st verse is, "By affirming, that if you had lived in the days of your fathers, you would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets, you acknowledge that you are the children of them who murdered the prophets;—their children, I must give you to know, in other respects, than by natural generation; for though you pretend to be more holy than they were, you are like them in all respects; particularly you possess their wicked persecuting spirit, and testify it by all your actions," See on Luke xi. 48. and 1 Macc. xiii. 27, 29. What Vitringa tells us, (de Synagog. p. 221.) of the extraordinary honour paid to the sepulchre of Mordecai, is an agreeable illustration of these words. Josephus also, from Nicolaus Damascenus, mentions Herod's repairing in a very splendid manner the sepulchre of David. See his Antiq. lib. xvi. cap. 7. and comp. Acts ii. 29. From the third to the 30th verse of this chapter is exposed every thing that commonly passes in the world for religion; whereby the pretenders to it keep both themselves and others from entering into the kingdom of God; from attaining or even seeking after those tempers, in which alone true Christianity consists; As *first*, punctuality in attending on public and private prayers, ver. 4. 14. *Secondly*, zeal to make proselytes to our opinion or communion, though they have less of the spirit of religion than before; ver. 15. *Thirdly*, a superstitious reverence for consecrated places or things, without any for him to whom

whom they were consecrated, ver. 16—22. *Fourthly*, a scrupulous exactness in little observances, though with the subject of justice, mercy and fidelity, ver. 23, 24. *Fifthly*, a cautiousness to cleanse the outward behaviour, without any regard to inward purity; ver. 25, 26. *Sixthly*, a spacious face of virtue and piety, covering the deepest hypocrisy and villainy; ver. 27, 28. *Seventhly*, a professed veneration for all good men, except those among whom they live; ver. 29, 30. See Bengelius. All, from ver. 29. to ver. 32, Grotius has very justly observed, should make one sentence; *οτι*, *because* referring to each member of it; and ver. 31. should be in a parenthesis: *Woe to you Scribes, because you build—and say—and fill up*, &c.

Ver. 32. Fill ye up then the measure, &c.] That is then the measure of your father's sins (the measure fixed upon by God for punishment.) See John xiii. 27. This expression implies, that there is a certain measure fixed for every nation to which its equity is allowed to rise; and that before punishment is inflicted on nations, the measure of their iniquity determined by God must be filled up, by the succeeding generations adding to the iniquity of the preceding, till the measure is full; An idea, which receives great countenance from Gen. xv. 16. According to Glassius, and other critics *καὶ πληρωσατε*, is here the *imperative* for the *future*,—*you will fill up*; but it may be understood as a word of permission, not of command. As if our Lord had said, “I contend with you no longer; I leave you to yourselves; you have conquered; you may now follow the devices of your own hearts.”

Ver. 33. Ye serpents, &c.] See Luke iii. 7. Men of warm tempers are apt to mistake this part of Christ's discourse; they fancy that his giving the

the Pharisees names expressive of their characters, and his denouncing woes against them, justifies those censorious judgments, which without reason, or, it may be, contrary to reason, they pass on persons who happen to be at variance with them. It is very true that Jesus pronounced the Scribes and Pharisees *hypocrites, blind guides, serpents, &c.* and declared that they could not escape the damnation of hell; but it is equally true, that they were hypocrites and fools, as wicked as he has painted them, and that he knew them certainly to be such. Wherefore, till we can make it evident that we have the faculty of knowing men's hearts, which Christ possessed, we have no pretensions to imitate him in an action not designed for our imitation, being done by him as a prophet, and in virtue of his prophetic gifts not as an ordinary man. Instead of making free with the characters of others, as too many do, it is far safer, and in every respect better, both for ourselves and for society, that we keep close to the precept forbidding rash judgments, evil surmisings, and all backbitings. See ch. vii. 1—5. *Αποφυγεν κριμα*, which is the same in sense with the original, rendered *to escape the damnation*, properly signifies, *to evade conviction* in a court of judicature; which is often done by the artifice of the criminal. See Raphælius and Macknight.

Ver. 34. Wherefore] *διὰ τὸ*, “for this cause— that ye are *serpents*, and a brood of *vipers*, who will fill up the measure of your father's iniquity.” Our Saviour's meaning was not, that he would send them prophets to be killed, that they might escape the damnation of hell; but that every possible method might be tried for their conversion, though he well knew that they would make light of all, and

by so doing, pull down upon themselves such terrible vengeance, as should be a standing monument of the divine displeasure against all the murders committed on the face of the earth from the beginning of time. For "even as Sodom and Gomorrah anciently, and the cities about them, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire;" just so the Jewish nation was singled out, and that generation of the nation pitched upon to be the subject of God's revenge against murder, and an example of punishment to all generations, as they were the most atrocious body of murderers that ever lived. The titles mentioned by our Lord in this verse, *prophets*, *wise men*, *scribes*, correspond with that *diversity of gifts* mentioned in the first epistle to the Corinthians: They are stiled *prophets*, because inspired to foretel things to come; *wise men*, because they were enlightened with the knowledge of heavenly mysteries; and *scribes*, from their superior knowledge of the law. Amongst the first martyrs whose death verified this prophecy were Stephen, who was stoned; Paul, who was scourged and killed; and Peter, who was crucified. See Macknight, Hammond, L'Enfant. Instead of *ye shall kill*,—*shall scourge*. Dr. Waterland and the MS. read *ye will kill*, &c.

Ver. 35. That upon you may come all the righteous blood] The meaning is, "As by your cruel and persecuting temper you seem to approve of all the murders which have been committed since the beginning of the world, you shall be as severely punished as if you yourselves had been the authors of them." This refers to temporal punishment, because in the life to come men will not be punished

punished for the sins of others to which they were not accessory. The Zechariah here spoken of, is thought by many learned commentators to be that *Zechariah* who is expressly said to have been slain in so remarkable a manner, between the temple and the altar. 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21. Though we cannot absolutely determine whether (as Chrysostom asserts) *Jehoiada* his father was also called *Barachiah*, which signifies one *that blesses the Lord*, as *Jehoiada* does one *that confesses* him; or whether the original reading was different from ours, as St. Jerome says he found in the Gospel of the Nazarenes, or the Hebrew version of Matthew. It is by no means necessary to allow, with Capellus, that it was a slip in the *Evangelist's* memory; but much more decent to suppose it an officious addition of some early transcriber, who might confound this martyr with *Zechariah*, one of the twelve minor prophets, who was indeed the son of *Barachiah*, but who does not by any means appear to have been murdered; nor is there any reason to imagine, that the Jews, so soon after their return from captivity, would have attempted so flagitious an act. *All the martyrs, from Abel to Zechariah*, seems to have been a proverb; and it might naturally arise from observing, that Abel was the first, and Zechariah in the *Chronicles* the last eminently good man, of whose murder the Scripture speaks. See Doddridge.

Ver. 36. This generation] This nation. MS.

Ver. 37, 38. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!] Our Lord having laid before the Pharisees and the nation, their heinous guilt and grievous punishment, the thought of the calamities which were coming upon them moved him exceedingly: his bowels were turned within him, and his breast was filled with the gracious meltings of pity to such a degree,

that, unable to contain himself, he broke forth into tears; bewailing Jerusalem particularly, on account of the peculiar severity of its lot. For, as its inhabitants had their hands more deeply imbrued in the blood of the prophets, they were to drink more deeply of the punishment due to such crimes. His lamentation for the city was most moving, *O Jerusalem! Jerusalem!* &c. These tender exclamations, which can hardly be read without tears, convey a strong idea of Christ's love to that ungrateful nation. The words, *how often*, mark his unwearied endeavours to cherish and protect them from the time they were first called to be his people; and the opposition which is stated between his will and theirs, *How often would I—but ye would not*, very emphatically shews their unconquerable obstinacy in resisting the most winning and most substantial expressions of the divine love. The clause, *Behold*, &c. is a prediction of the punishment which was to be inflicted upon them for their sin in rejecting Christ. *Their house*, (the temple of God, See 2 Kings v. 8.) was from that time to be *desolate*. The *glory of the Lord*, which Haggai had foretold should fill the second house, was departing. Our Lord spoke this as he was going out of his house for the last time. See Howe's Tears of the Redeemer.

Ver. 39. Henceforth] *an' agra, hereafter*. "Because you have killed the prophets, and endeavoured to stone me, whom the father hath sent unto you; because your great men are at this moment plotting against me, who am the Lord of the temple; and because you will assist them in putting me to death; your temple shall be desolate: It shall never be favoured with my presence any more. Nay, your nation shall be deserted by me; *For you shall not*

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see me from henceforth, &c." In the capacity of a teacher, Jesus had often filled the temple with the glory of his doctrine and miracles; and as a kind friend, had tried with unwearied application to gather the nation under his wings, that he might protect them from the impending judgements of God. Therefore, by their not seeing him from that time forth, we are to understand their not enjoying his presence and care as a teacher, guardian, and friend. This was the discourse that Jesus pronounced in public; with it his ministry ended. From that moment he abandoned the Jewish nation, gave them over to work in their own counsels, and devoted them to destruction; nor were they ever after to be the objects of his care, till the period of their conversion to Christianity should come, which he now foretold: *Ye shall not see me till ye say, Blessed, &c.* that is, till your nation is converted; for the state of the nation, and not of a few individuals, is here spoken of, as it is also in the parables of the vineyard and the marriage supper. *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord* was the cry of the believing multitude when Jesus made his public entry into Jerusalem a few days before this. Hence, in predicting their future conversion, he alludes in a very striking manner to that exclamation, by which they had expressed their faith in him as the Messiah. This is by far the most spirited of all our Lord's discourses, and being pronounced no doubt with an elevation of voice, and vehemence of gesture, suitable to the sentiments which it expressed, it could not but astonish the people, who had always looked upon their teachers as the holiest of men. Even the persons themselves against whom it was levelled were confounded; their consciences

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witnessing the truth of what was laid to their charge. They knew not what course to take, and so, in the midst of their hesitation, they let Jesus go away quietly, without attempting to lay hands on him, or stone him, as they had sometimes done before upon less provocation. See Grotius, Macknight, and Olearius. Thus did our Lord pull the mask of hypocrisy from off the teachers of his own times, condemning it in all its forms. He treated hypocrisy with severity, because it is a most enormous sin, rendering men criminal before God by things, which in their own nature are calculated to please him; such as prayer, alms-giving, fasting, and other religious duties.

CH A P. XXIV.

Ver. 1. And Jesus—departed, &c.] Our Saviour was in the temple, speaking to a mixed audience of his disciples and the multitude, when he uttered that pathetic lamentation at the close of the preceding chapter; wherein he hath left to his disciples a generous and amiable pattern of a patriot spirit; and from whence we see how contrary to truth is the insinuation of a noble writer, that there is nothing in the Gospels to recommend and encourage the love of one's country. See Shaftesbury's Characteristic's, vol. i. p. 99. Such a resolution as that mentioned by our Lord, ver. 38, 39. appeared very strange to his disciples, and affected them much; for which reason they stopped him, as he *was departing out of the temple*, and desired him to observe what a magnificent structure it was; insinuating,

insinuating, that they were surprised to hear him talk of leaving it desolate ! that so rich and glorious a fabric was not to be deserted rashly ; and that they should all be very happy when he, as Messiah, took possession of it, with the other palaces which of right belonged to him. They were going to the mount of Olives, which stood eastward from the city. It was the eastern wall, therefore, of the temple, fronting that mountain, which the disciples desired their master to look at, and which being built from the bottom of the valley to a prodigious height with stones of an incredible bulk, firmly compacted together, made a very grand appearance at a distance. The stones employed in the foundations were in magnitude forty cubits, i. e. above sixty feet ; and the superstructure was worthy of such foundations. There was some stones of the whitest marble, forty-five cubits long, five cubits high, and six cubits broad, as a priest of the temple hath described them. In Mr. Mede's opinion, the eastern wall was the only part of Solomon's structure which remained after the Chaldeans burned the temple. Hence the portico built on the top of it obtained the name of Solomon's porch or portico. See Joseph. Antiq. l. xv. c. 14. War. l. vi. c. 6. The magnificence of the fabric, however, was not the only topic they descanted upon. They spake also of the precious utensils wherewith it was furnished, and of the *gifts* wherewith the treasury was enriched ; for there the gifts of ages were deposited, the presents of kings and emperors, as well as the offerings of the Jews. Hanging up such *anathemata*, or consecrated *gifts*, was common in most of the ancient temples. Tacitus, *Histor.* lib. 5. speaks of the immense opulence

ance of the temple at Jerusalem. Amongst other of its treasures there was a golden table given by Pompey, and several golden vines of exquisite workmanship, as well as immense size; for Josephus tells us, that they had clusters as tall as a man, which some have thought referred to God's representing the Jewish nation under the emblem of a *vine*. Josephus likewise asserts, in the place above quoted, that the marble of the temple was so white, that it appeared at a distance like a mountain of snow; and the gilding of several of its external parts which he there mentions, must, especially when the sun shone upon it, render it a most splendid and beautiful spectacle. See Luke xxi. 5, and Mark 13. Chapters, which the reader will please to keep in view while we go through the present; and we would refer him by all means to Josephus's History of this event. Christian writers have always, with great reason, represented his History of the Jewish War as the best commentary on this chapter; and many have justly remarked it, as a wonderful instance of the care of Providence for the Christian church, that this writer, an eye witness, and in these things of so great credit, should be preserved, and especially in so extraordinary a manner preserved, to transmit to us a collection of important facts, which so exactly illustrate this noble prophecy in almost every circumstance.

Ver. 2. There shall not be left here one stone] No impostor, Bp. Chandler very justly observes, would have attempted to foretel an event at once so disagreeable, and so improbable as it seemed at present, considering the peace of the Jews with the Romans, and the strength of their citadels which forced Titus himself to acknowledge, that it was the
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the singular hand of God which compelled them to relinquish fortifications unconquerable by human power. The worthy Bp. of Bristol (to whose accuracy and learning we shall be peculiarly obliged in the course of these annotations, as we have already enriched a former part of the commentary from his valuable *Dissertations on the Prophecies*) observes, that our Saviour in His prophecies, frequently alludes to phrases and expressions used by the ancient prophets; and as Haggai ii. 15. expresseth the building of the temple, by a *stone being laid upon a stone*, so Christ expresseth the destruction of it by *one stone not being left upon another*. See Luke xix. 44. It is a proverbial expression to denote an utter destruction; and the prophecy would have been amply fulfilled if the city and temple had been entirely ruined, though every single stone had not been overturned. But it happened in this case that the words were almost literally fulfilled, and scarce one stone was left upon another. For when the Romans had taken Jerusalem, Titus ordered his soldiers to dig up the foundations both of all the city and the temple. The temple was a building of such strength and grandeur, of such splendor and beauty, that it was likely to be preserved for a monument of the victory and glory of the Roman empire: Titus was accordingly very desirous of preserving it; and protested to the Jews who had fortified themselves within it, that he would preserve it even against their will. He had expressed the like desire of preserving the city too, and sent Josephus and other Jews, again and again, to their countrymen, to persuade them to surrender; but one greater than Titus had determined it otherwise. The *Jews* themselves first set fire to the *Particos* of the temple, and then the Romans.

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One of the soldiers neither waiting for any command, nor trembling at such an attempt, but urged by a certain divine impulse, says Josephus, mounted the shoulder of his companion, and thereby set fire to the building of the temple itself. Titus ran immediately to the temple and commanded his soldiers to extinguish the flame; but neither exhortations nor threatenings could restrain their violence; they either could not, or would not hear; those behind encouraging those before to set fire to the temple. Titus was still for preserving the *holy place*: He commanded his soldiers even to be beaten for disobeying him. But their anger and hatred of the Jews, and a certain warlike vehement fury, overcame their reverence for their General, and the dread of his commands. A soldier in the dark, set fire to the doors; and thus, as Josephus says, the temple was burned against the will of Cæsar. Afterwards, as we read in the Jewish Talmud, and in Maimonides, Terentius Rufus, who was left to command the army at Jerusalem, did with a plow share tear up the foundation of the temple and thereby signally fulfilled, Micah iii. 12. Eusebius too affirms, that it was plowed up by the Romans, and that he saw it lying in ruins. The city also shared the same fate, and was burned and destroyed as well as the temple. The Romans burned the extremest parts of the city, and demolished the walls; three towers only, and some part of the wall were left standing for the better encamping of the soldiers, and to shew to posterity what a city, and how fortified, the valour of the Romans had taken. All the rest of the city was so demolished and levelled with the ground, that they who came to see it, could not believe that it was ever inhabited. After

ter the city was thus taken and destroyed, great riches were found among the ruins; and the Romans dug them up, in search of the treasures which had been cancelled and buried in the earth. So literally were our Saviour's words accomplished, in the ruin both of the city and of the temple; and well might Eleazor say, "That God had delivered his most holy city to be burned and subverted by their enemies;"—and "wish that they had all died before they saw that holy city demolished by the hands of their enemies, and the sacred temple so wickedly dug up from the foundations." See Bp. Newton's 18th Dissertation, and Josephus's War, l. 6 and 7.

Ver. 3. And as he sat upon the mount of Olives] When the disciples heard their master affirm, that not so much as one of those stones, which had mocked the fury of Nebuchadnezzar's army, and survived the envy of time, was to be left upon another, but that they were to be all thrown down, they perceived that the temple was to be demolished; but at this time none of our Lord's followers had the least apprehension that he was to take away the sacrifice, and make such a change in religion as would render the temple of no use: and therefore hearing him speak of its demolition, they no doubt supposed, that the fabric then standing was too small for the numerous worshipers who should come when all nations were subjected to the Messiah, and that it was for that reason to be pulled down, in order to be erected on a more magnificent plan, suitable to the idea they had conceived of the greatness of his future kingdom. Entertaining these imaginations, they conceived the news with pleasure, and fancied to themselves very glorious things as they travelled along. Accordingly,

ly, when Jesus was come to the mount of Olives, and had taken a seat on some eminence, from whence the temple and part of the city was to be seen, they *drew near*, and expressed their joy by desiring to know when the demolition of the old structure was to happen, and what were to be the signs of his coming, and of the end of the world. *The sign of the coming and of the end of the world*, are only different expressions to denote the same period with the destruction of Jerusalem; for they conceived, that when Jerusalem should be destroyed, then would be the coming of Christ; and when the coming of Christ, then the *end of the world*, or rather as it should be rendered, *the conclusion of the age*, *ἡ συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος*. *The conclusion of the age* is the same period with the destruction of Jerusalem; for there being two *ages*, as they were called among the Jews, the one under the law, the other under the Messiah, when the city and temple were destroyed, and the Jewish polity in church and state was dissolved, the former age must of course be concluded, and the age under the Messiah be commenced. The phrase appears to be used in the same manner as in Hebrews ix. 26. *But now once in the end of the world*—[*ἡ συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος*],—in the conclusion of the Jewish age or ages] *hath he appeared, to put away sin*. See Heb. vi. 5. Ephes. ii. 2, 7. 1 Cor. x. 11. The coming of Christ is also the same period with the destruction of Jerusalem, as may appear from several places in the Gospel, but particularly from ch. xvi. 28. and John xxi. 22. The coming of Christ, and the conclusion of the age being therefore only different expressions to denote the same period with the destruction of Jerusalem, the purport of the question plainly is, “When shall the destruction
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of Jerusalem be, and what shall be the sign of it?" The latter part of the question our Saviour answers, first, treating of the *signs* of his coming, and of the destruction of Jerusalem from the 31st verse, and then passes on to the other part of the question, concerning the *time* of his coming. By *signs* are meant the circumstances and accidents which should forerun, usher in, and attend this great event; and we may venture to affirm, that the whole compass of his history cannot furnish us with a prophecy more exactly fulfilled in all points than this has been. "Our Lord (says Dr. Doddridge upon this subject) with perfect integrity and consummate wisdom, answers the question of the disciples, by giving them an account of the prognosticating and concomitant *signs* of the destruction of Jerusalem; and then without saying one word of any temporal kingdom to be erected, which was the strongest idea then in their minds, raises their thoughts to the final judgment, to which the figures used in the former description might many of them be literally applied; and sets before them an heavenly kingdom, and eternal life, as the great object of their pursuit." See ch. xxv. 34—66. This I take to be the key to this whole discourse. As the things which befel the Jewish nation, says Macknight,—their bondage in Egypt, their deliverance from that bondage, their passage through the red Sea, abode in the wilderness, entrance into Canaan, &c. &c. were all typical, representing the methods by which God delivers mankind from the bondage of sin, and conducts them to heaven; so the destruction of the nation here set forth may prefigure the destruction of the world, though the prophecy cer-

tainly cannot be interpreted primarily of that destruction.

Ver. 4, 5. Take heed that no man deceive you] Our Saviour mentions false Christs as the first sign of his coming. He begins with this in all the Evangelists, and in all uses almost the same words: only in St. Luke xxi. 8. he adds, *the time draweth near*; and indeed within a little time this part of the prophecy began to be fulfilled. Very soon after our Saviour's decease, appeared *Simon Magus*, who boasted himself among the Jews as the son of God, and gave out amongst the Samaritans, that he was *some great one*, Acts viii. 9, 10. Of the same stamp and character was *Doctheus* the Samaritan, who pretended that he was the Christ foretold by Moses. In the reign of Claudius, about twelve years after the death of our Saviour, an impostor, named *Theudas*, persuaded a great multitude to follow him, with their best effects, to the river Jordan; for he said that he was a prophet, and promised to divide the river for their passage; and saying these things, he deceived many, says Josephus: but Fadus sent a troop of horse against them, who falling unexpectedly upon them, killed many, and made many prisoners; and having taken Theudas himself alive, they cut off his head, and brought it to Jerusalem. A few years afterwards, in the reign of Nero, these impostors rose so frequent, that many of them were apprehended and killed every day. They seduced great numbers of the people, still expecting the Messiah. Our Saviour therefore might well caution his disciples against them. See the note on ver. 24. Bp. Newton, and Archbp. Tillotson's discourse on this subject.

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Ver. 6. And ye shall hear of wars, &c.] To relate the particulars of wars and rumors of wars, which happened at the period here referred to, would be to transcribe great part of Josephus's history. There were more, especially rumours of wars, when Caligula, the Roman emperor ordered his statue to be set up in the temple at Jerusalem, which the Jews refused to suffer, and persisted in their refusal; and having therefore reason to apprehend a war from the Romans, were in such a consternation, that they omitted even the tilling of their lands. But this storm was soon blown over, and their fear dissipated by the timely death of that emperor. *But be ye not troubled, says our Lord, at the prospect of these calamities, for all these things must first come to pass: they must come to pass a considerable time before the destruction of the nation; but the end is not yet.* The end of the age, or Jewish dispensation, and the demolition of the temple, will not be immediately on the back of these things. See on ver. 8.

Ver. 7. For nation shall rise, &c.] Here, as Grotius observes, Christ declares, that greater disturbances than those which happened under Caligula should fall out in the latter times of Claudius, and, in the reign of Nero. The rising of *nation against nation* portended the dissensions, insurrection, and mutual slaughters of the Jews, and those of other nations, who dwelt in the same cities together; as particularly at Cæsarea, where the Jews and Syrians contended about the right of the city; which contention at length proceeded so far, that above twenty thousand Jews were slain, and the city cleared of the inhabitants. At this blow the whole nation of the Jews was exasperated, and dividing themselves into parties, they burned

and plundered the neighbouring cities and villages of the Syrians, and made an immense slaughter of the people. The Syrians, in revenge, destroyed not a less number of Jews; and every city, as Josephus expresses it, was "divided into two armies." At Scythopolis the inhabitants compelled the Jews who resided amongst them to fight against their own countrymen, and after the victory, basely setting upon them by night, murdered above thirteen thousand of them, and spoiled their goods. At Ascalon, they killed two thousand five hundred; at Ptolemais, two thousand, and made not a few prisoners. The Tyrians put many to death, and imprisoned more. The people of Gadara did likewise, and all the other cities of Syria, in proportion as they hated or feared the Jews. At Alexandria the old enmity was revived between the Jews and Heathens, and many fell on both sides, but of the Jews to the number of fifty thousand. The people of Damascus too conspired against the Jews of the same city, and assaulting them unarmed, killed ten thousand of them. The rising of *kingdom against kingdom* portended the open wars of different tetrarchies and provinces against one another; as that of the Jews who dwelt in Peræa against the people of Philadelphia concerning their bounds, while Caspius Fadus was procurator; that of the Jews and Galileans against the Samaritans, for the murder of some Galileans going up to the feast at Jerusalem, while Cumanus was procurator; and that of the whole nation of the Jews against the Romans and Agrippa, and other allies of the Roman empire, which began while Gessius Florus was procurator. But as Josephus saith, there was not only sedition and civil war throughout Judea, but likewise in Italy, Otho and Vitellius contending for the

the empire. It is farther added, *and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes in different places.* There were *famines*, as particularly that prophesied of by Agabus, and mentioned Acts xi. 28. and by Suëtonius and other profane historians referred to by Eusebius, *which came to pass in the days of Claudius Cesar*, and was so severe at Jerusalem, that, as Josephus saith, many perished for want of victuals:—and *pestilences*, for these are the usual attendants upon famines. Scarcity and badness of provisions almost always end in some epidemical distemper. We see many died by reason of the famine in the reign of Claudius; and Josephus farther informs us, that when Niger was killed by the Jewish zealots, he imprecated, besides other cruelties, famine and pestilence upon them, (*μῆλοντι καὶ λοιμῶν*, the very words used by the Evangelist,) all which, saith he, God ratified and brought to pass against the ungodly.—*And earthquakes in divers places*; as particularly that in Crete, in the reign of Claudius, mentioned by Philostratus in the life of Apollonius; those also mentioned by Philostratus at Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, Samos, in all which places some Jews inhabited; those at Rome mentioned by Tacitus; that at Laodicea, in the reign of Nero, mentioned by Tacitus, which city was overwhelmed, as were likewise Hierapolis and Colosse; that in Campania, mentioned by Seneca; that at Rome, in the reign of Galba, mentioned by Suetonius; and that in Judea, mentioned by Josephus: for by night there broke out a most dreadful tempest, and violent strong winds, with the most vehement showers, and continual lightnings, and horrid thunderings, and prodigious bellowings of the shaken earth; so that it was manifest, as he observes, that the constitution of the

universe was confounded for the destruction of men; and any one might easily conjecture, that these things portended no common calamity.

Ver. 9. Then shall they deliver you up, &c.] Had Jesus been an impostor, he would, like all other impostors, have fed his followers with fair hopes and promises; but on the contrary, we see that he denounceth persecution to be the lot of his disciples; he pointeth out to them the difficulties they must encounter, the fiery trials they must undergo.

Ver. 13. Then shall many be offended, &c.] By reason of persecution and of the universal hatred which all nations bore against the Christian name, *many were indeed offended*, and apostatized from the faith; as particularly *Phygellus* and *Hermogenes*, and *many others* in Asia, 2 Tim. i. 15. and Demas,—iv. 10. But they were not only to apostatize from the faith, but also to *betray and hate one another*. To illustrate which point, we need only cite a sentence out of Tacitus, speaking of the persecution under Nero: “At first, says he, several were seized, who confessed, and then by their discovery, a great multitude of others were convicted and executed.” Bp. Newton, p. 232.

Ver. 11. Many false prophets shall arise] Such particularly were *Simon Magus*, and his very numerous followers, the Gnostics. Such also were the Judaizing teachers, mentioned 2 Cor. xi. 13. Such also were *Hymenues* and *Philetus*, of whom the Apostle, 2 Tim. ii. 17. complains, that they affirmed *the resurrection to be past already, and overthrow the faith of some*. See Bp. Newton, as above.

Ver. 12. Because iniquity, &c.] The genuine fruit and effect of these evils was the lukewarmness and coolness among Christians. By reason of these trials

trials and persecutions from without, and these apostasies and false prophets from within, the love of *many* to Christ and his doctrine, and also their love to each other shall wax old. Some shall openly desert the faith, as ver. 18. some shall corrupt it, as ver. 11. and others again, as here, shall grow indifferent to it; and, not to mention other instances, who can hear St. Paul complaining at Rome, 2 Tim. iv. 16. *that at his first answer all men forsook him*; who can hear the divine author of the Epistle to the Hebrews exhorting them, ch. x. 25. *Not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, as the manner of some is*, and not conclude the event to have sufficiently justified our Saviour's prediction? Bp. Newton, p. 233. Instead of *love*, Dr. Heylin reads *charity*. The word ἀγάπη, says he, originally signifies love in general; but in the Christian stile it is become a technical term, and is commonly appropriated to signify the *love of God*.

Ver. 13. Indeed it is very remarkable, and was certainly a most signal act of Providence, that none of the Christians perished in the destruction of Jerusalem. See Luke xxi. 18. 2 Pet. ii. 9. and Bp. Newton as above.

Ver. 14. This Gospel shall be preached in all World—and then, &c.] Then shall the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the Jewish policy come to pass; when all nations shall be, or may be convinced of the crying sins of the Jews in crucifying the Lord of Glory and of the justice of God's Judgments upon them. Some imagine that by *all the world* is meant only the whole land of Judea, the very words of the text being used by the Septuagint, and by Josephus himself in this sense. But that something more than this must be meant, will appear, if we consider, that though
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the Acts of the Apostles contains only a small part of the history of a few of the Apostles, yet even in that history we see the Gospel was disseminated, and had taken root in the most considerable parts of the Roman empire. As early as the reign of Nero the Christians were grown so numerous at Rome, as to raise the jealousy of the government, and the first general persecution was commenced against them under pretence of their having set the city on fire. The Gospel was preached by St. Paul in Arabia, and through the vast tract from Jerusalem to Iconium, in Lycaonia, and in Galatia, through all Asia Minor, in Greece, round about to Illycrium, in Crete, Italy, Spain, and Gaul. Clement, who was his contemporary and fellow-labourer, says of him in particular, "that he was a preacher both in the east and west; and that he taught the whole world righteousness, and travelled as far as the utmost borders of the west." And if such were the labours of one Apostle, what must have been the united labours of them all? We have still remaining the epistles of St. Peter to the converted Jews in Pontus, Asia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia. The Ethiopian eunuch converted by Philip probably carried the Gospel into his own country: It appears, indeed, from the writers of the history of the Church, that before the destruction of Jerusalem the Gospel was not only preached the lesser Asia and Greece, and Italy, the great theatres of action then in the world, but was likewise propagated as far Northward as Scythia, as far Southward as Ethiopia, as far Eastward as Parthia and India, and as far Westward as Spain and Britain. Our ancestors of these Islands, though as remote from the fame of our Saviour's actions as almost any nation, probably heard the preaching of St. Simon; there

there is indeed much more probability that the Gospel was preached here by St. Paul; and there is absolute certainty that Christianity was planted in this country in the days of the Apostles, before the destruction of Jerusalem. The evidence of Eusebius and Theodoret abundantly prove it to have been fact; and St. Paul himself, Col. i. 6, 23. speaks of the Gospel's *being* come into all the world, and *preached* to every creature under heaven. See also Rom. x. 18. Though the success of the Apostles was so great, yet the difficulties they had to encounter were no less than the superstition, the prejudices, and the views of the whole world; difficulties of so much the harder conquest, as being derived, though by corruption, from good principles; namely, the religion, the nature, and the reason of mankind. From a view of the Jewish and Gentile world it is evident, that every thing which most strongly influences and tyrannizes over the mind of man, religion, custom, law, policy, pride, interest, *vice*, and even philosophy, was united against the Gospel; enemies in their own nature very formidable and difficult to be subdued, had they even suffered themselves to be attacked upon even ground, and come to a fair engagement; but, not relying upon their own strength only, they intrenched themselves behind that power of which they were in possession, and rendered themselves inaccessible, as they imagined, to Christianity, by planting round them not only all kinds of civil discouragements, but even torments, chains and death. These were the difficulties which Christianity had to struggle with, and over which she at length so prevailed, as to change the whole scene of things, overturn the temples and altars of the gods, silence the oracles, humble the impious pride of the emperors, confound the presumptuous wisdom

wisdom of the philosophers, and introduce into the greatest part of the known world a new principle of religion and virtue. But what were the instruments of so stupendous a work! a few illiterate persons, many of whom were fishermen! The state of the first preachers of the Gospel, and their opposers, was this: the latter were possessed of all the wisdom, authority and power of the world; the former were ignorant, contemptible, and weak. Which of them, according to the natural course of human affairs, ought to have prevailed? The latter, without all doubt; and yet not St. Paul only, but all history, and our own experience assure us, that the ignorant, the contemptible, and the weak gained the victory from the wise, the mighty, and the noble. See Bp. Newton, *West on the Resurrection*, and Dr. Young on *Idolatry*, vol. 2.

Ver. 15, 16. When ye therefore shall see, &c.] Whatever difficulty there be in these words, it may be cleared up by the parallel place, Luke xxi. 20, 21. From whence it appears that the *abomination of desolation* is the Roman army, and the *abomination of desolation standing in the holy place*, that army besieging Jerusalem. This, saith our Saviour, is the *abomination of desolation* spoken of by Daniel the prophet, ch. ix. and x. and so let every one who reads these prophecies understand them. The Roman army is called the *abomination*, because its ensigns and images were so to the Jews, among whom every image of a man, and every idol, was called an *abomination*. After the city was taken, the Romans brought their ensigns into the temple, and placed them over against the eastern gate, and sacrificed to them there. The Roman army therefore is fitly called the *abomination*, and the *abomination of desolation*, as it was to desolate and lay waste Jerusalem: And

And this army's besieging Jerusalem, is called *standing in the holy place*; the city, and such a compass of ground about it, being accounted *holy*. "When therefore the Roman army shall approach to besiege Jerusalem, then let them who are in Judea consult their own safety, and fly into the mountains." This counsel was wisely remembered, and put in practice by the Christians afterwards. When Cestius Gallus came with his army against Jerusalem, many fled from the city: After his retreat, many of the noble Jews departed from it; and when Vespasian was approaching it with great forces, a vast multitude, says Josephus, fled from Jericho into *the mountainous country* for their security. At this juncture all who believed in Christ left Jerusalem, and removed to Pella, and other places beyond the river Jordan; so that they all marvelously escaped; and we do not read any where that so much as one perished in the destruction of Jerusalem: Of such signal service was this caution of our Saviour to the believers! See Bp. Newton, vol. ii. p. 241, &c. and Bullock's Vindication, book i. ch. 4. Dr. Heylin reads the last words, *Let him that reads, consider it well.*

Ver. 17. Let him who is on the house-top] The houses of the Jews, the present inhabitants of the east, as well as those of the ancient Greeks and Romans, were flat on the top for them to walk on, and had usually two pair of stairs, one on the inside, and the other on the out, by the latter of which they could ascend and descend, without coming into the house. In the eastern walled cities these flat-roofed houses usually formed continued terraces from one end of the city to the other, which terraces terminated at the gates. He, therefore, who is walking and regaling himself upon the
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the house-top, let him not come down to take any thing out of his house; but let him instantly pursue his course along the tops of the houses, and escape out at the city-gate as fast as he possibly can. Bp. Newton, p. 244.

Ver. 18. Neither let him who is in the field return] Our Saviour makes use of these expressions to intimate, that their flight must be as sudden and hasty as Lot's was out of Sodom; and the Christians escaping just as they did was the more proverbial, because afterwards all egress out of the city was prevented. These are as strong expressions as one can imagine, to urge the speediest retreat. It is indeed observable that this whole discourse abounds with very lively figures of oratory, and is heightened with the noblest beauties of description. See Bp. Newton, and Elfner's Observations, vol. i.

Ver. 19. Woe unto them that are with child, &c.] For neither will such persons be in a condition to fly, neither will they be able to endure the distress and hardships of a siege. This woe was sufficiently fulfilled in the cruel slaughters which were made both of the women and children, and particularly in that grievous famine which so miserably afflicted Jerusalem during the siege. For mothers, as Josephus reports, snatched the food from the very mouths of their infants; and the houses were full of women and children who perished by famine. See the note on Deut. xxviii. 53—56. and Bp. Newton, p. 245.

Ver. 20. But pray ye that your flight be not, &c.] *And pray ye, &c. MS.* "Pray that these evils be not further aggravated by the concurrence of other natural and moral evils, such as the inclemencies of the seasons, and your own superstitions:

titions : *Pray that your flight be not in the winter ;*
 for the hardness of the season, the badness of the
 roads, and the shortness of the days, will all be
 great impediments to your flight; *neither on the*
Sabbath day ; that you may not raise the indignation
 of the Jews by travelling on that day, nor be hin-
 dered from doing it by your own superstition." This
 seems to be spoken a good deal in condescension
 to the Jewish prejudices, a *Sabbath-day's* journey
 among the Jews being but about a mile; and con-
 sequently insufficient for the security of their lives
 who fled. It has been observed, (on Ps. cxlvii. 16.
 and Ezra x. 9.) that the winters are extremely cold
 in the Holy Land. St. Jerome speaks of the cold of
 that country as frequently too severe to be borne
 by those who might be glad to secrete themselves
 for fear of their lives; and in his letter to Algasia,
 he thus understands, as to the literal sense, the di-
 rection of our Lord here given to his disciples;
 the severity of the cold being such, as would not
 permit them to conceal themselves in the deserts.
 Agreeable to this, and at the same time a lively
 comment on these words of our Lord, is the ac-
 count which William of Tyre gives of the state of
 Saladine's troops after their defeat in the neigh-
 bourhood of Ascalon. " They for haste threw
 away their armour and clothes, [*vestium genera qua-*
libet ; i. e. their bykes and burnoses, described by
 Dr. Shaw, p. 226. which they found intangled
 them, and retarded their flight] but so sunk under
 the cold, with want of food, tediousness of the
 ways, and greatness of the fatigue, that they were
 daily taken captives in the woods, mountains, and
 wilderness; and sometimes threw themselves in the
 way of their enemies, rather than *perish with cold*
and hunger." See the *Observations on Sacred Scrip-*

ture, p. 15. As our Saviour cautioned his disciples to fly when they should see Jerusalem encompassed with armies; so was it very providentially ordered that Jerusalem should be compassed with armies, and yet that they should have such favourable opportunities of making their escape. In the 12th year of Nero, Cestius Gallus came against Jerusalem with a powerful army; and though, if he had assaulted the city, he might have taken it, and have put an end to the war; yet, without any apparent reason, and contrary to every one's expectation, he raised the siege. Vespasian, who succeeded him in the command, invested the city on all sides; but the news of Nero's death, and soon after Galba's, caused him to suspend his operations against Jerusalem; and the city was not actually besieged in form, till Vespasian was confirmed in the empire, and Titus was sent to command the forces in Judea. These incidental delays were very opportune for the Christians, and those who had thoughts of retreating and providing for their safety. Bp. Newton.

Ver. 21. Then shall be great tribulation] In the preceding verses our Saviour warned his disciples to fly as soon as ever they saw Jerusalem besieged by the Romans, and now he assigns a reason for his giving them this caution. The words used in this verse seem to be a proverbial form of expression, as in Exod. x. 14. Joel ii. 2. Daniel xii. 11. 1 Macc. ix. 27. Our Lord, therefore, might fitly apply the same manner of speaking upon the present occasion: But he doth not make use of proverbial expressions without a proper meaning; and this may be understood even literally. For indeed all history cannot furnish us with a parallel to the calamities and miseries of the Jews; rapine and murder,

murder, famine and pestilence within, fire and sword, and all the terrors of war without. Our Saviour wept at the foresight of these calamities, and it is almost impossible for persons of any humanity to read the relation of them without weeping too. The Jewish historian might well say, as he doth in the preface to his history: "If the misfortunes of all, from the beginning of the world, were compared with those of the Jews, they would appear much inferior upon comparison. In short, no other city ever suffered such things, as no other generation, from the beginning of the world, was ever more fruitful of wickedness." See Luke xxi. 22, &c. and Bp. Newton, p. 250.

Ver. 22. Except those days shall be shortened] "If these wars and desolations were to continue, *no flesh*—none of the *Jews*, would escape destruction." The number of those who perished in the siege were about *eleven hundred thousand*, besides those who were slain in other places; and if the Romans had gone on destroying in this manner, the whole nation of the Jews would certainly, in a little time, have been extirpated. *But, for the elect's sake, those days shall be shortened.* The *elect* is a well-known appellation in Scripture and antiquity for the *Christians*; and the Christian Jews, partly through the fury of the zealots on the one hand, and the hatred of the Romans on the other, and partly through the difficulty of subsisting in the mountains, without houses or provisions, would in all probability have been almost all destroyed, either by the sword or by famine, if the days had not been shortened; but providentially the days were shortened. Vespasian, who was advanced in years, and therefore could not carry on the siege with that vigour which might cause the city soon to fall into

his hands, transferred the command to Titus; who, having Rome, and the riches and pleasures there, before his eyes, took every measure which might render his expedition successful, and contribute to his glory, by the shortness of the time which he employed to effect it. The besieged too helped to shorten the days by their divisions and mutual slaughters, by burning their provisions, which would have sufficed for many years, and by fatally destroying their strong-holds, where they could never have been taken by force, but by famine alone. By these means *the days were shortened*; and indeed otherwise Jerusalem could never have been taken in so short a time, so well fortified as it was, and so well fitted to sustain a longer siege. The enemy could hardly ever have prevailed, but for the factions and seditions within. Titus himself could not but ascribe his success to God, as he was viewing the fortifications after the city was taken. His words to his friends are very remarkable: "We have fought with God on our side, and it is God who has pulled the Jews out of their strong-holds; for what could the hands of men or machines do against these towers?" God, therefore, in the opinion of Titus, *shortened these days*. After the destruction of Jerusalem too, God inclined the heart of Titus to take some pity upon the remnant of the Jews, and to restrain the nations from effecting the cruelty that they would have exercised against them. At Antioch particularly, the senate importuned him to expel the Jews from the city; but he answered, that their country being laid waste, there was no place to receive them. They then requested him to deprive the Jews of their former privileges; but those he permitted them to enjoy as before. Thus, *for the elect's sake, those days*
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of persecution *were shortened*. See Bp. Newton, p. 254. and particularly Dr. Jackson's Credibility of the Scriptures.

Ver. 23, 24. Lo, here is Christ, or there] In fact, many such impostors did arise about that time, and promised deliverance from God; but as it was to little purpose for a man to take upon him the character of the Christ, or even of a prophet, without miracles to vouch his divine mission, so it was the common artifice and pretence of these impostors to shew *signs and wonders*. Simon Magus performed wonders, according to the account given of him, Acts viii. 9—11. Dositheus likewise was reputed to do so; and Barchochebas is said to have pretended to vomit flames. Such also were the Jews of whom St. Paul speaks, 2 Tim. iii. 8, 13. There is a strange propensity in mankind to believe things marvellous and astonishing; and no wonder that weak and wicked men, Jews and Samaritans, were deceived by such impostors, where, if *it had been possible*, they would have deceived the *very elect*,—even the Christians themselves. See Bp. Newton, p. 257. This is not a mere repetition of what was said before, ver. 5. but relates more particularly to those impostors who appeared during the time of the siege; concerning whom, see Josephus's War, b. vi. c. 5. Euseb. Eccles. Hist. b. iv. ch. 6. and Grotius on the place.

Ver. 25—26. Behold, &c.] “Behold, I have given you sufficient warning.” It is surprising that our Saviour should not only foretel the appearance of these impostors; but also the manner and circumstances of their conduct; for some he mentions as appearing *in the desert*, and some in secret chambers, and the event hath in all points answered to the prediction. Several of the false Christs

and false prophets conducted their followers into deserts, where they promised to *shew* wonders and *signs*; and many being persuaded, suffered the punishments of their folly; some of them being brought back by Felix, and chastised or slain by him. The Egyptian false prophet mentioned, Acts xxi. 38. *led out four thousand into the wilderness that were murderers*; but being engaged by Felix, the Egyptian himself with others fled away, and most of those who had been with him were slain or taken prisoners. These things happened before the destruction of Jerusalem. And a little after, one Jonathan, a weaver persuaded many indigent fellows to follow him *into the desert*, promising to shew them signs; but most of his followers were also slain, some made prisoners, and he himself was afterwards taken, and burned alive, by order of Vespasian. As several of those impostors conducted their followers *into the desert* so did others of them into the *secret chambers* or places of security; particularly the false prophet mentioned by Josephus, who, declared, that God commanded the people to go up into the temple where they should receive the signs of deliverance. A multitude of men, women and children went up accordingly; but instead of deliverance, the place was set on fire by the Romans, and six thousand perished in the flames, or by throwing themselves down to escape them. From hence it is obvious, that in all probability there hath been a true prophet, a true Christ, otherwise there would hardly have been so many cheats and counterfeits. We may likewise observe, that the Messiah was particularly expected about the time of our Saviour, and consequently that the prophets had beforehand marked out that very time for his coming. We read not of any false Messiahs before the age of our Saviour, nor of so many in any age after;

after; and why did they rise in that age particularly, if the Messiah was not at that time particularly expected? And why did the Jews expect their Messiah at that time more than any other, if that was not the time before appointed for his coming? Bp. Newton, p. 259, and 266. Dr. Waterland, instead of *secret chambers*, reads *secret places*.

Ver. 27. As the lightning—shall the coming of the Son of man be] His coming will not be in this or that particular place, but, like the lightning sudden and universal. The appearance of the true Christ will be as distinguishable from that of the false Christ's as lightning, which shineth all round the hemisphere, is from a blaze of straw. It is very remarkable, "That the Romans entered into Judea on the east-side of it, and carried on their conquests westward; as if not only the extensiveness of the ruin, but the very route which the army should take was intended, in the comparison of the lightning coming out of the east, and shining even in the west. See Pearce's Dissert. on the Destruction of Jerusalem, and Bp. Newton, p. 263.

Ver. 28. Wheresoever the carcase is, &c.] By the word *carcase* is meant the Jewish nation which was morally and judicially dead, and whose destruction was pronounced in the decrees of heaven. Our Saviour, after his usual manner, applies a proverbial expression with a particular meaning: for, as according to the old proverb *wherever*, &c. so wheresoever the Jews are, there will Christ be; taking vengeance upon them by the Romans, who are properly compared to eagles, as the fiercest beasts of prey, and whose ensign was an eagle, to which also probably our Saviour in this passage alluded. And as it was said, so it was done;
for

for the victories of the Romans were not confined to this or that place, but like a flood over-ran the whole land. There was no part of Judea that did not partake of the calamities of the captivity. At Antioch many were burnt in the theatre, and others were slain; the Romans slew them every where; at Jarden not fewer than three thousand were put to death. Being on the point of being taken at Masada, they first murdered their wives and children, and then themselves, to the number of nine hundred and sixty, to avoid falling into the enemy's hands. In Cyrene the followers of Jonathan the weaver were most of them slain; he himself was taken prisoner, and by his accusation, three thousand of the richest Jews were put to death. Bp. Newton, p. 263.

Ver. 29. Immediately after the tribulation, &c.] Commentators generally understood this and what follows, of the end of the world, and of Christ's coming to judgment; but the words evidently shew that he is not speaking of any distant event; but of something consequent upon the tribulation before-mentioned, and that must be the destruction of Jerusalem. It is true, his figures are very strong; but not stronger than are used by the ancient prophets on similar occasions. See Isai. xiii. Bp. Warburton observes upon the subject, that this prophecy of Jesus concerning the approaching destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, is conceived in such high and swelling terms, that not only the modern interpreters, but the ancient likewise have supposed, that our Lord interweaves into it a prediction of his coming to Judgment: but if we consider the nature of the two dispensations, and the necessity of abolishing the former, before the introduction of the latter, it will then appear, that
this

this prophecy doth not respect Christ's *second coming* to judgment, but his *first* in the abolition of the Jewish polity, and the establishment of the Christian; that kingdom of Christ which commenced on the total ceasing of theocracy. For as God's reign over the Jews entirely ended with the abolition of the temple service, so the reign of Christ *in spirit and in truth*, had taken its first beginning. This was the true establishment of Christianity, not that affected by the donations or conversations of Constantine. Thus till the Jewish war was abolished, over which the *Father* presided as king, the reign of the son could not take place; because the sovereignty of Christ over mankind was that very sovereignty of God over the Jews *transferred*, and more largely extended. This therefore being one of the most important æras in the œconomy of grace, and the most awful revolution in all God's religious dispensations, we see the elegance and propriety of the terms in question, to denote so great an event, together with the destruction of Jerusalem, by which it was affected: for in the old prophetic language, the change and fall of principalities and powers, whether spiritual or civil, are signified by the *shaking heaven and earth*—the *darkening the sun and moon*,—and the *falling of the stars*; as the rise and establishment of new ones are by *processions in the clouds of heaven*, by the *sounds of trumpets*; and the *assembling together of hosts and congregations*." See Bp. Newton, p. 281, 285. Bp. Warberton's Julian, b. i. ch. i. p. 21. and the next note.

Ver. 30. And then shall appear, &c.] The plain meaning of this is, that the destruction of Jerusalem will be such a remarkable instance of divine vengeance; such a signal manifestation of Christ's

Christ's power and glory, that all the Jewish tribes shall mourn, and many will be led from thence to acknowledge Christ and the Christian religion. In the ancient prophets God is frequently described as *coming in the clouds* upon any remarkable interposition and manifestation of his power; and the same description is here applied to Christ. The destruction of Jerusalem will be as ample a manifestation of Christ's power and glory, as if he was himself to come visibly in the clouds of heaven. Bp. Newton, p. 283. See on John vi. 30. and Gerhard's Dissertations, p. 200, &c.—Dr. Clarke says, that the *sign* here mentioned means the figure given by the prophet Daniel, the signal of that *Son of Man* there described vol. v. ferm. 2. Instead of *the tribes of the earth*, Dr. Waterland reads *the tribes of the land*.

Ver. 31. And he shall send his angels] This is all in the stile and phraseology of the prophets, and stripped of its figures, meaneth only, that after the destruction of Jerusalem, Christ, by his angels or ministers, will gather to himself a glorious church out of all the nations under heaven. No one ever so little versed in history needs to be told that the Christian religion spread and prevailed mightily after this period; and hardly any one thing contributed more to this success of the Gospel, than the destruction of Jerusalem, falling out in the very manner, and in the very circumstances so particularly foretold by our blessed Saviour. Bp. Newton, p. 234. Most translations, as well as our own, have greatly obscured this text, by rendering the word *αγγελους*, *angels*; for though it generally signifies those celestial spirits who are on great occasions the messengers of God to our world, it is well known that the word refers not to their nature, but

but to their office, and is often applied to men, and rendered *messengers*. See Mark i. 2. Luke vii. 24, 47. ix. 52. 2 Cor. viii. 23. Philip ii. 25. and James ii. 23. in some of which places it signifies, as here, preachers of the Gospel, who were sent forth to carry on God's great designs of uniting all his chosen people in one society, under Christ their common head. See Ephes. i. 10.

Ver. 32, 33. Now learn a parable of the fig-tree] Our Lord having answered the latter part of the question proposed ver. 3. proceeds in these verses to answer the former part, as to the *time* of his coming, and the destruction of Jerusalem. And he begins by observing, that the signs which he had given would be as certain an indication of the time of his coming, as the fig-tree's putting forth its leaves is of the approach of summer. Dr. Heylin reads the last clause of the 33d verse, *know that the Son of man is near*; but from Luke xxi. 29. it appears that ours is the most proper translation.

Ver. 34. This generation shall not pass, &c.] Our Lord proceeds to declare, that the time of his coming was at no very great distance; and to shew that he hath been speaking all the while of the destruction of Jerusalem, he affirms with his usual asseveration, *Verily I say unto you*, &c. It is therefore matter of wonder how any man can refer part of the foregoing discourse to the destruction of Jerusalem, and part of it to the end of the world, or any other distant event, when it is said so positively here, *all these things shall be fulfilled in this generation*. See Bp. Newton, p. 317. Matth. xxvi. 64. and Mark ix. 1.

Ver. 35. Heaven and earth shall pass away] It seems as if our Saviour had been aware of some such

such misapplication of his words, as is intimated in preceding note, by adding yet greater force and emphasis to his affirmation: *heaven and earth shall pass*, &c. It is a common figure of speech in the oriental languages, to say of two things, that the one *shall be*, and the other *shall not be*, when the meaning is only, that the one shall happen sooner or more early than the other,—as in this instance of our Saviour: The meaning therefore is, “Heaven and earth shall sooner or more easily pass away, than my words shall pass: The frame of the universe shall sooner or more easily be dissolved, than my words shall fail of being fulfilled.” See Luke xvi. 17.

It appears next to impossible that any man should duly consider these prophecies, and the exact completion of them; and if he is a believer, not be confirmed in the faith; or if he is an infidel, not be converted: Can any stronger proof be given of a divine revelation than the Spirit of prophecy? And can any stronger proof be given of the spirit of prophecy, than the example now before us? In which so many contingencies, and we might say improbabilities, which human wisdom or prudence could never foresee, are so particularly foretold, and so punctually accomplished! At the time when Christ pronounced these prophecies, the Roman governor resided at Jerusalem, and had a force sufficient to keep the people in obedience; and could human prudence foresee, that the city as well as the country would revolt and rebel against the Romans? Could any human prudence foresee *famines*, and pestilences, and earthquakes in divers places? Could human prudence foresee the speedy propagation of the Gospel, so contrary to all human probability? Could human prudence foresee

such

such an utter destruction of Jerusalem, with all the circumstances preceding and following it? It was never the custom of the Romans absolutely to ruin any of their provinces; it was improbable therefore that such a thing should happen at all, and still more improbable that it should happen under the humane and generous Titus, who was indeed, as he was called, *the love and delight of mankind*. Yet however probable this was, it has happened, and it was foreseen and foretold by Christ; but how was it possible for him to do it, unless his foresight was divine, and his prediction the infallible oracle of God? See Bp. Newton, p. 317, 326. and Macknight.

Ver. 36. But of that day and hour knoweth no man] The word *ἡμέρα*, is of a larger signification than *hour*; and besides, it seems somewhat improper to say, *of that day and hour knoweth no man*; for if the *day* was not known, certainly the *hour* was not, and it was superfluous to make such an addition. The passage therefore might be rendered “of the *day and season*,” &c. as the word is frequently used in the best authors, both sacred and profane. It is true our Saviour declares, *all things shall be fulfilled in this generation*; It is true, the prophet Daniel hath given some intimation of the time in his famous prophecy of the seventy weeks: But though this great revolution was to happen in that generation; though it was to happen at the conclusion of seventy weeks, or four hundred and ninety years, to be computed from a certain date that is not easy to be fixed; yet the particular day, the particular season in which it was to happen might still remain a secret to men and angels: And our Saviour had before (ver. 20.) advised his disciples to pray, that their flight might not be in the

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winter,

winter, neither on the sabbath-day. The DAY not being known, they might pray that their flight be not on the *sabbath-day*; the *season* not being known, they might pray that their flight might not be in the *winter*. See the note on Mark xiii. 32. and Bp. Newton, p. 519.

Ver. 37—39. But as the days of Noah, &c.] The *days of Noah* signify the days in which he preached to the old world that righteousness which they ought to have practised, and denounced the judgements of God to fall on them, if they did not repent of their wickedness. By parity of reason, the *days of the Son of man* signify the days in which Christ and his Apostles preached to the Jewish nation, whose behaviour here is said to have been the same with that of the old world, and of the Sodomites, under the preaching of Noah and Lot. See Luke xvii. 28. They went on secure, and wholly intent upon their worldly affairs, without being in the least moved by the repeated warnings of the divine judgements, which Jesus and his Apostles gave them; for which cause these judgements fell on them, and destroyed them.

Ver. 40, 41. Then shall two be in the field, &c.] Providence will then make a distinction between such, as are not at all distinguished now. Some shall be rescued from the destruction of Jerusalem, like Lot out of the burning of Sodom; while others, no ways perhaps different in outward circumstances, shall be left to perish in it. See Bp. Newton's dissertations, p. 321. and Luke xvii. 31. Dr. Doddridge is of opinion, that the grand transition from the description of the destruction of Jerusalem to that of the day of judgement, is made precisely after these two verses. For after them there is not a word peculiar to that destruction, but many

many circumstances are introduced which refer to the day of judgement, and of death as transmitting to it, and which can only be thus understood. Our Lord, in the following verses of St. Matthew and St. Mark, directs their thoughts to that final solemnity in which they are so highly concerned, by repeating; almost in the same words, the cautions and advices he had formerly given, Luke xii. 35, &c. In which whole context there is no reference to the temporal calamities coming on the Jews, which have been the subject of almost the whole preceding discourse; and the remembrance of what had passed on the former occasion, might the more easily lead them to the distinct understanding of what was now added; though it may not be improper to recollect, that the same pious care in the temper and conduct, which would be a preparative against national judgements, and intitle them to the special protection of Providence in them, would also secure them from any unwelcome surprise by a call to the tribunal of God.

Ver. 43. But know this, that, &c.] *But consider, that if, &c.* Heylin.

Ver. 44. Therefore, be ye also ready] As the miseries which men were to undergo at the destruction of Jerusalem, the reasons of that destruction, the passions which its approach would raise in their minds, together with the suddenness and unexpectedness of it, nearly resembled what shall happen at the destruction of the world and the general judgement; it was natural for our Lord, on this occasion, to put the disciples in mind of that judgement, and to exhort them to the faithful discharge of their duty, from the uncertainty of the time of his coming to call every particular person to an account at death. Concerning the form

and structure of the parable in the next verses, see the notes on Luke xii. 42, &c.

Ver. 46, 47. Blessed is that servant] “You, the ministers of religion, ought to be particularly faithful in the discharge of your duty; for it is not an ordinary trust which is committed to your charge; you are stewards, whose business it is to take care of the whole family; and who, because of the influence which your example may have upon the rest, ought to be remarkably diligent, that you may provoke your fellows to be frugal, active, and sober. Your duty is, to be well acquainted with the stores of evangelical truths, and to understand how they may be best applied. You should know likewise the characters of the various persons under your charge; that you may be able to give every one of them their portion of meat in due season: And if when I come, I find you thus employed, you are blessed; for I will highly reward you with the joys of my kingdom; even as an earthly master bestows particular marks of respect on such servants as have been remarkably faithful in any important trust.” We may just observe, that as no peculiar rewards were conferred on any of the Apostles, or other faithful ministers, at the time of Christ’s coming to destroy Jerusalem, this clause sufficiently proves a reference to the final judgement; and will not permit us, with Dr. Hammond, to understand the *Gnostics*, or with Dr. Whitby, the *apostate Jews*, as particularly intended by the subsequent mention of the *wicked servant*; which seems plainly to refer to a debauched and persecuting clergy, hypocritically pretending to a distinguished zeal for Christian forms and institutions. See Hammond, Whitby, and Doddridge.

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Ver. 48—51. But, &c.] *But if that servant, being evil, shall say, &c.* Wat. Heylin, and MS. “If on the other hand you behave like wicked stewards, who, because their Lord delays his coming, beat their fellow-servants, and get drunk with fots and epicures: If you tyrannize over the consciences of your brethren, neglect the duties of your function, and give yourselves up to sensual pleasures; I will come, when you little think of it, and make you dreadful examples of my indignation, by the severe punishments which I will inflict upon you.” It is remarkable, that in this parable the crime of the unfaithful steward is said to have been sensuality; particularly drunkenness, than which a more abominable vice can hardly be named. A drunkard,—one who employs himself in erasing the illustrious signature of reason, which God stamped upon him in creation, as the prerogative of his nature; and who makes himself incapable of his duty, while he is ready to commit every sin to which a temptation offers; What a monster is this, and how unlikely to lead others in the way of eternal life! See Macknight.

Ver. 51. Shall cut him asunder] This was one of the heaviest kinds of punishment anciently used: See 1 Sam. xv. 33. 2 Sam. xii. 31. Dan. ii. 5. iii. 29. A. Gellius, lib. xx. c. 1. In the passage first cited we are told that Samuel *hewed Agag to pieces*; wherefore, as that action proceeded from the greatness of the prophet’s wrath, the same punishment inflicted on the slothful, sensual, merciless steward, fitly expresses the greatness of his Lord’s indignation. In ancient times the stewards of great families were slaves, as well as the servants of the lower class, being raised to that trust on account of their fidelity, wisdom, sobriety, and other good qualities:

qualities: If any steward, therefore, in the absence of his Lord, behaved as is represented in the parable, it was a plain proof that the virtues on account of which he was raised were counterfeit, and by consequence that he was an hypocrite. Slaves of this character, among other chastisements, were sometimes condemned to work in the mines; and as this was one of the most grievous punishments when they first entered, nothing was heard amongst them but weeping and gnashing of teeth, on account of the intolerable fatigue to which they were subjected in these hideous caverns, without hope of release:—*There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* But, because the immediate effect of being cut asunder is death, and not a state of bitter lamentation, the Greek particle of connection may be understood in this verse disjunctively;—*Shall cut him asunder, or appoint him, &c.*] unless we can suppose that in the latter clause our Lord speaks not according to the form, but the meaning of his parable. The Prussian editors, after several learned critics, render the word *διχοτομήσου*, which literally signifies *shall cut asunder*,—by *shall separate him*, which it signifies metaphorically; (see ch. xxv. 32.) This interpretation they observe is proved from hence, that it is immediately added, *and shall appoint him his portion with the hypocrites*; which plainly expresses his separation from the company of faithful servants. See Stockius on the word. It has been observed upon this last verse, that if ministers are the persons here primarily intended, there is a peculiar propriety in the expression, *shall appoint him his portion with the hypocrites*; for no hypocrisy can be greater, than to call ourselves ministers of Christ, while we are the slaves of ambition, avarice, and intemperance. Wherever such are found, under
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whatever mark or form, may God reform them by his grace; or disarm them of that power and influence which they continually abuse, to his dishonour, and to their own aggravated damnation!

REFLECTIONS ON CHAP. XXIV.

The first reflection which naturally occurs to the thinking mind on reading this remarkable chapter, is the strange and surprising manner in which the prophecies recorded in it have been fulfilled and the unanswerable arguments which may there be drawn for the truth of our Saviour's divine mission; as hath been urged at large in the note on ver. 35.

What is usually objected to the other predictions of holy writ, cannot with any pretence be objected to these prophecies of our Saviour,—that they are figurative and obscure; for nothing can be conveyed in plainer, simpler terms, except where he affected some obscurity for particular reasons, as hath been hinted in the course of the notes. It is allowed, indeed, that some of these prophecies are taken from Moses and Daniel; our Saviour prophesying of the same events, hath borrowed and applied some of the same images and expressions; but this is a commendation, rather than any discredit to his predictions: He hath built upon the foundations of the inspired writers before him; but what a superstructure did he raise! He hath acted in this case, as in every other, like one who came *not to destroy* the law and prophets, but to *fulfil* them. He hath manifested himself to be the true prophet, by his exact interpretation and application of other prophets. He is also much more particular and circumstantial than either Moses or Daniel; in several instances

instances his prophecies are entirely new, and properly his own; and besides he uses greater precision in fixing and confining the time to that very generation.

The sudden and amazing progress of the Gospel, which spread so far and so wide before the destruction of Jerusalem, and which our Saviour here so minutely foretold, cannot fail to strike us. The greatness of the work which was wrought, the meanness of the instruments who wrought it, and the short time that it was wrought in, must force all considering men to say, *This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.* The Mahometan religion, indeed, in less than a century over-ran a great part of the world; but then it was propagated by the sword, and owes its success to arms and violence: But the Christian religion was diffused over the face of the earth in the space of 40 years, and prevailed not only without the sword, but against the sword; not only without the powers civil and military to support it, but against them all united to oppress it: And what but the spirit of God could bid it thus go forth conquering, and to conquer? *Had this counsel or this work been of men, as Gamaliel argued, it would have come to nought, but being of God, nothing could overthrow it.*

Observe we again, that for the completion of these prophecies, the persons seem to have been wonderfully raised up and preserved by divine Providence. Vespasian was promoted from obscurity; and though feared and heated by Nero, was yet preferred by him, and singled out as the only general among the Romans who was equal to such a war; God perhaps, as Josephus intimates, so disposing and ordering affairs. Titus was wonderfully preserved in some of the most critical articles of danger; upon which

which Josephus observes, remarkably enough, that from hence it is obvious to understand that the turns of war, and the danger of princes, are under the peculiar care of God; and indeed Josephus himself was no less wonderfully preserved than Titus; the one to destroy the city, the other to record its destruction, in the history which was most particularly authenticated. As a general in the wars, he must have an exact knowledge of all transactions; and as a Jewish priest he would not relate them with any favour or partiality to the Christian cause. His history was approved by Vespasian and Titus, who ordered it to be published; and by king Agrippa, and many others, both Jews and Romans, who were present in those wars. He had likewise many enemies who would readily have convicted him of falsification if he had been guilty of any. He designed nothing less;—and yet, as if he had designed more, his History of the Jewish Wars may serve as a large comment on our Saviour's prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem.

As these prophecies are the clearest, and the most minutely fulfilled, so were the calamities the greatest which the world ever saw; and what heinous sin was it which could bring down such heavy judgments on the Jewish church and nation? Can any other be designed with half so much probability as what the Scripture assigns,—their crucifying the Lord of glory? This is always objected as the capital crime of the nation: and upon reflecting we shall find some correspondence between their crime and their punishment, as every reader may have remarked from what hath gone before.—They put Jesus to death when the nation was assembled also to celebrate the passover: and when the nation was assembled to celebrate the passover, Titus shut them up within

within the walls of Jerusalem. The rejection of the true Messiah was their crime ; and the following of false Messiah's to their destruction was their punishment. They sold and bought Jesus as a slave ; and they were themselves afterwards sold and bought as slaves at the lowest prices. They preferred a robber and a murderer to Jesus, whom they crucified between two thieves ; and they themselves were afterwards infested and over-run with robbers and murderers. They put Jesus to death, lest the Romans should come and take away their place and nation ; the Romans did come and take away their place and nation. They crucified Jesus before the walls of Jerusalem ; and before the walls of Jerusalem they themselves were crucified in such numbers, that room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses for the bodies. One would think it hardly possible for any man to lay these things together, and not conclude the Jews own imprecation to be remarkably fulfilled. *His blood be upon us, and upon our children !*

We Christians indeed cannot be guilty of the same offence in crucifying the Lord of glory ; but it behoves us to consider, whether we may not be guilty in the same kind, and by our sins and iniquities crucify afresh the son of God, and put him to an open shame ; and therefore, whether being like them in their crime, we may not also resemble them in their punishment. They rejected Christ ; and we indeed have received him : but have our lives been agreeable to our holy profession ? or rather, as we have had opportunities of knowing Christ more, have we not obeyed him less than other Christians, and trodden under foot the Son of God, counting the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified,

tified, an unholy thing and doing despite to the Spirit of grace?

The flagrant crimes of the Jews, and the principal sources of their calamities, in the opinion of Josephus, were their trampling upon all human laws, deriding divine things, and making a jest of the oracles of the prophets, as so many dreams and fables: and how hath the same spirit of licentiousness and infidelity prevailed likewise in our land! how have the laws and lawful authority been insulted with equal insolence and impunity!—How have the holy Scriptures, these treasures of divine wisdom, not only been rejected, but despised, derided, and abused to the very worst purposes! How have the principal articles of our faith been denied, the prophecies and miracles of Moses and the prophets, of Christ and the Apostles been ridiculed, and impiety and blasphemy not only been whispered in the ear, but proclaimed from the press! How have all public worship and religion, and the administration of the sacraments been slighted and contemned!—Alas, how much are they still slighted, and the sabbath profaned! and that too by those who ought to have set a better example, to whom much is given, and of whom therefore much will be required! And how few serve God with a loving willing spirit, desirous to advance in holiness, and to be more and more perfect, influenced by the powerful love of their master. On the contrary, they seek only how little is necessary to be done, and with how small a portion of religion a man may be supposed to save his future interests, as if they were unwilling to serve God, who gives them all, more than needs must. Surely nothing can be more abominable to the great God of love! And if for their sins and provocations God spared not the natural

tal branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee: Because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith! Be not high-minded, but fear. God bore long with the Jews, and hath he not bore long with us also;—but at length the fearful day came:—It may come to *Us* also.

Whatever may be the case with particular states and people, this we do know assuredly, that as Jerusalem perished in sore destruction, so shall destruction, utter and terrible, one day overwhelm this world, and with it all our hopes, and all our earthly pleasures! The sun shall then indeed be darkened, the moon shall then indeed withhold her light, and all the stars shall withdraw their shining. And then in all his glory shall the son of Man himself appear,—appear to judge,—to judge and fix irrevocably the doom of all mankind!

When reflection casts her eye on that great, that important hour, how astonishing doth it seem, that poor weak worms like us, should dare to defy such Omnipotence, and arm such a power, by our bold offences, in wrath against us! How amazing doth it seem, that any thing in this life should captivate our hearts, and make us wretched slaves to things so soon to perish, and be utterly dissolved! How amazing doth it seem, that pride and arrogance, vanity and self-conceit should ever swell our bosoms, when the remembrance of Omnipotence seated in glory to judge us and our fellow sinners, should sink us into the deepest humility, and most perfect self-renunciation.

CHAP. XXV.

Ver. 1. Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened, &c.] Be like to, &c. Wat. and MS. The particle *then* evidently points out the connection of the present parable with the latter part of the preceding chapter. Our Lord having mentioned the rewards and punishments of a future state, in order to animate his disciples to the rigorous discharge of their duty, it was easy and elegant to pass from that subject to the consideration of the general judgment, at which these rewards will be distributed in their utmost extent. And therefore, to rouse men in every age, he has given a striking representation of the last judgment, with its consequences in three excellent parables. He had before frequently declared what would be the portion of all the *workers of iniquity*: But what will become of those who *do no harm*, though they do no good?—Inoffensive, good sort of people? We have in the present chapter a clear and full answer to this important question. The first parable is that of the *ten virgins*, who waited to meet the bridegroom: *Then shall the kingdom of heaven*, &c. i. e. “At the general judgment, the character, conduct, and lot of the subjects of the kingdom of heaven, (of the professors of the Gospel) may be represented by the character, conduct and lot of virgins at a wedding.” It seems in those countries, the bridegroom commonly brought home his bride in the evening; and that she might be received at his house in a suitable manner, his female friends, of the younger sort, were invited to come and wait with lamps, till some of his retinue, despatched before the rest, brought word that he was at hand; on this they

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went forth with their lamps trimmed to welcome him, and conduct him with his bride into the house. And for this service they had the honour of being guests at the marriage feast.

Ver. 12. Verily I know you not] In this parable, by *the kingdom of heaven* is meant the Gospel kingdom; the kingdom of grace in its last dispensation, when it is about to be swallowed up in Glory. By the ten virgins are meant the complete and general number of all Christian professors; the church of God upon earth, mixed with good and bad; and as an equal number of each is mentioned, it may perhaps be insinuated that the number of those who will be saved, is not inferior to those who will be lost. By their taking the lamps, and going forth to meet the bridegroom, is meant their taking upon them by baptism, and their leading their lives in the outward profession of the Christian faith. By the bridegroom is meant the Lord Jesus, the everlasting bridegroom of his spouse the church. By the *foolish virgins* are meant mere professors, Christians only in name, who have a lamp without oil, faith without love. By the wise virgins are meant real Christians, who to an outward profession join inward holiness; who have not only the form, but the power of godliness; faith which works by love: a life beautiful by the fruits of the Holy Spirit, whose gifts and graces particularly are figured out to us by the oil. By the slumber and sleep of them all, wise as well as foolish, is meant death the common lot of good and bad. By the midnight cry *to go forth and meet the bridegroom*, is meant the last awful summons to judgment, the archangel's trumpet, and the voice of God. By the solicitude of the foolish virgins, the discovery

discovery which nominal professors will make too late of their deficiency in holiness. By the reproof of the wise is shewn the impossibility of transferring good works from one to another; and of consequence the absurdity of the papist doctrine of supererogation; since no man at that day will be found to have more than enough for himself. By the admission of the wise to the marriage feast, is meant the happy entrance of true Christians into bliss eternal with their all-glorious bridegroom, and by the exclusion of the foolish, the everlasting banishment of the strangers to true holiness from that bliss. And as the parable represents the suddenness of Christ's coming, it shews us both the folly and danger of delaying repentance to a death-bed, and powerfully enforces habitual watchfulness, both in the acquisition and exercise of grace, upon all men in every age, from the uncertainty of life;—for the day of death is to each one of us as the day of judgment. Accordingly, the application of the parable is, *watch therefore*, &c. ver. 13. The reader will find these particulars more fully explained in the 16th sermon, vol. ii. of my Discourses on the *Parables*, and in Archbishop Tillotson's sermons on this parable.

Ver. 14. For the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling] For He [*the Son*, ver. 13] *is as a man*, &c. *The kingdom of heaven*, added by our translators, appears to be repeated from the first verse; but the connection seems to require the version here given. See the notes on Luke xix. 12. Instead of *goods*, Dr. Waterland reads *stock*;—*his effects*, Dr. Heylin.

Ver. 15. Unto one he gave five talents] A *talent* being in value about 187*l.* 10*s.* He who had five talents, received 937*l.* 10*s.* and he who had two,

375*l.* sterling. The distributing these various sums in proportion to the different abilities, wisdom, and activity of the persons to whom they were given, shews the propriety of the choice, and the prudence of the giver. See the note on ver. 30. and Prideaux's preface to his Connection, p. 20.

Ver. 21. Well done!] The original word Εἰ, hath a peculiar force and energy, far beyond what we can express in English. It was used by auditors or spectators, in any public exercise, to express the highest applause, when any part had been excellently performed.

Ver. 30. *And cast ye the unprofitable servant, &c.*] In this parable, by the man travelling into a far country, is represented to us our Saviour, who is said to do so either in reference to his ascent into heaven, or to that long-sufferance of his, whereby he waited for the fruit of our works. By *his own servants* are meant not mankind in general, but the subjects of his Gospel kingdom, who are entrusted with his spiritual gifts and graces, as well as with such as are common to the rest of the world; and of necessity, by the *goods* or *talents* entrusted to them, must be meant not only the gifts of *nature*, but of *grace*, which God distributes to his servants, to some more, to some less, according to his own good pleasure and sovereign will; and according to the *ability* and capacity of improvement, which he in wisdom discerns in the several subjects of his free bounty. By the *servants* who *improved* their lord's talents are meant those who diligently labour to improve all the gifts of God, natural and spiritual, agreeable to the will of their heavenly Master, *perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord*; while by the *slothful servant*, such are pictured out to us
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as live solely to themselves, without regard to the glory of God, or the good of mankind.

Ver. 34. Then shall the king say] One cannot imagine a more magnificent image than this before us! The assembled world, distinguished with such unerring penetration, and distributed into two grand classes, with as much ease as sheep and goats are ranged by a shepherd in different companies;—that assembled world waiting to receive their everlasting doom from the lips of Almighty and impartial justice! But while in this grand representation, Jesus asserts his proper dignity as Lord over all, he acknowledges his subordination in the kingdom of his Father, by addressing the righteous in the sentence he passes upon them, as persons *blessed of his father*.

Ver. 41—46. Depart from me, ye cursed] It may seem strange, that in this representation of the judgement, the enquiry should be said to turn not upon the commission of crimes, but upon the performance of duties. The reason may be, that generally speaking, men look upon the neglect of duties, as a trivial affair, but dread the commission of crimes: and hence it comes to pass, that while they keep themselves clear of the latter, they are apt to find many excuses for the former. Wherefore, as there is not a more pernicious error respecting religion and morality than this, it was highly becoming the wisdom of Jesus, to give such an account of the judgment, as should be the most solemn caution possible against it.

But since the enquiry is said to turn wholly upon the performance of duties, it may seem more strange still, that the offices of charity are mentioned, and not a word spoken of any search made into men's conduct with regard to the duties of

piety; notwithstanding the judge himself upon another occasion declared such to be of greater importance than the duties of charity, which are so highly applauded in the parable. See on chap. xxii. 34, &c. Nevertheless, to justify this part of the representation, let it be considered, that piety and charity never can subsist separately; piety and its root, faith, always producing charity; and charity, wherever it subsists, necessarily presupposing piety.

The connection between piety and charity will clearly appear, provided this dictate of reason and experience is attended to, namely, that no man can be truly benevolent and merciful without loving those dispositions. If so he must love benevolence in God, that is, he must love God himself;—I speak of those who believe there is a God:—for piety or the love of God, is nothing else but the regard we cherish towards God, on account of his persecutions.

REFLECTIONS ON CHAP. XXV.

The same great and important truth that there is such a thing as negative goodness is three times shewn in this chapter. In the parable of the *virgins*,—in the much plainer parable of the servants who had received the *talents*,—and in a direct declaration of the manner in which our Lord will proceed at the last day. The several parts of these answer exactly to each other, only each rises above the preceding.

CHAP. XXVI.

Ver. 3. Who was called Caiaphas] See John xi. 49. Joseph Caiaphas was made high-priest by Valerius Gratus, as we learn from Josephus, Antiq. b. xviii. c. 3. and afterwards deposed by Vitellius, ch. 6. We may infer from Acts v. 17. that Caiaphas was of the sect of the Sadducees.

Ver. 5. Not on the feast-day] Ἑορτῇ, the *feast*; i. e. the whole time of the solemnity, which lasted seven days. All this interval was favourable to uproars and seditions, on account of the vast concourse of people.

Ver. 6, 7. Now when Jesus was in Bethany] *Now Jesus being in Bethany.* Wat. and MS. It is not thought that Simon was now a *leper*; for in this case he would not have been suffered to live in a town, nor would the Jews have come to an entertainment at his house; but either he was once a leper, and had been cured by Jesus, or else the name was given to the family, as some considerable person in it had formerly been a leper. It was customary among the ancients to regale their guests at entertainments with perfumes, odours, and chaplets of flowers, in token of respect; odoriferous balsams, gums, &c. were likewise used by the Jews and Egyptians to embalm their dead. Instead of, *very precious ointment*, some would render the Greek, *odoriferous balsam of great price*. See Mark xiv. 3.

Ver. 8. But when his disciples saw it] It appears from John xii. 14. that none but Judas found fault with what this woman had done. St. Matthew hath put the *disciples* in general, for one of the disciples; as he saith elsewhere, with St. Mark, that the
thieves

thieves reviled Jesus Christ, though it is evident from St. Luke xxiii. 39. that there was but one guilty of that crime. By the figure called *enallagé*, the plural number is put for the singular, which Longinus mentions as an elegance in his treatise on the sublime. See Josh. vii. 1, 21. and comp. Luke xxiii. 36. John xix. 29. with Matth. xxvii. 48. and Mark xv. 36.

Ver. 15. They covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver] The shekel was equal to the weight of 320 barley corns, or half a Roman ounce, consequently in silver was equal to two shillings one farthing and a half, sterling. *Thirty shekels* were the price of a slave. See Zech. xi. 13. It deserves to be remarked that Judas did not fix this price himself, but the Jewish Sanhedrim; and therefore, as it was the very price predicted by a prophet, no collusion could be suspected between Christ and his disciples, to make an appearance of his resembling the Messiah in such circumstances, as otherwise he might not have resembled him.

Ver. 17, 18. Now the first day of the feast, &c.] It was customary for the inhabitants of Jerusalem to prepare rooms, tables, &c. for strangers to celebrate this festival; at which time, as appears by the Talmudists, the houses were not to be let, but were of common right for any one to eat the passover in: So that there would have been nothing extraordinary in the orders which our Lord gave his disciples, to make ready the paschal supper, though he had not specified the person, which, however, he most probably did.

Ver. 20. Now when the even was come] When the Jews celebrated the passover, they assembled together, from ten to twenty in number, at some private house, where, after they had washed their feet,

feet, they sat, or more properly speaking, laid down, and eat the lamb with unleavened bread. After this repast was finished, they washed again, and lying down the second time, they had for the second course, a dish of sallad, consisting of bitter herbs, into which they put a kind of sauce named *Haroseth*; made of palm-tree branches, or raisins and berries, bruised and mixed with vinegar and seasoning, to represent the clay of which their fathers made bricks in Egypt; for *Haras*, is the Hebrew word for a *brick*. Then the master of the family, dividing the bread into two parts, is said to have blessed one of them in the following form of words: "Blessed be thou, Lord our God, the king of the whole world, in the eating of unleavened bread;" but he hid the other part under the napkin till the feast was ended. Afterwards, he took the piece of bread that was hidden, and having divided it into as many parts as there were persons present, distributed to every one of them, using these words; "This is the bread of affliction which our fathers ate in the land of affliction. Let him that is hungry come, and eat the passover; let him that hath need come, and eat the passover. Then taking the cup, he first tasted it himself, and afterwards presented it to each of them, saying, "Blessed be thou, O Lord, who hast created the fruit of the vine." We should observe, that after eating the unleavened bread and bitter herbs, one of the younger persons present, (generally a child) asked the reason of what was peculiar in that feast, according to Exod. xii. 26. which introduced the *Haggadah*, i. e. the shewing forth or declaration of it: in allusion to which we read of *shewing forth the Lord's death*, 1 Cor. xi. 26. After these things they sung Psalm cxiii. and the five Psalms following, which they called The great Hallelujah; and thus the

the feast ended. See the author's above quoted, Josephus's war, b. vi. ch. ix. and the *Religious Ceremonies*, vol. i. 215.

Ver. 29. But I say unto you] *Moreover I say*, &c. Wat. and MS. In Luke xxii. 18. our Lord made the same declaration concerning the passover cup. Hence we gather his meaning, upon the whole, to have been this; that he would neither partake of the passover, nor of the sacrament, till he had the satisfaction to see the things signified by these institutions fulfilled in the Gospel dispensation, which therefore was nigh at hand. See on Mark xiv. 25.

Ver. 30. And when they had sung an hymn] This is thought by some to have been one of the Psalms used at the paschal feast, see on ver. 20. The mount of Olives stood over-against the temple of Jerusalem, about fifteen stadia from the city. Our Lord usually retired thither after having taught in the temple.

Ver. 33—35. Peter answered, &c.] The 34th verse is expressed differently by St. Mark, who represents our Lord as saying, *before the cock crow twice*, &c. and from ch. xiii. 35. of that Gospel it appears, that one of the four watches of the night was named *the cock crowing*: Now as this ended with the second crowing, *before the cock crow*, is equivalent to *before the cock crow twice*, both signifying, "before the expiration of the watch called the *cock crowing*;"—at three in the morning, when the cock commonly crows the second time. Or we may suppose that this expression in the three historians is elliptical; and that the *twice* is understood, and must be supplied. See examples of this kind of ellipsis, on John xiii. 36.

Ver.

Ver. 36. Unto a place called Gethsemane] The *Gethsemane* in Hebrew signifies the *valley of fatness*. The garden probably had its name from its soil and situation, with some peculiar reference thereto, some have rendered it, *torcular olei*,—*a vat of oil*. See *Isai. lx. 3.* Macknight, and *Univ. History*, vol. x.

Ver. 37. He took with him Peter, &c.] These disciples were admitted to the most striking circumstances of our Lord's conduct: They were present when he raised *Jairus's daughter*; they were present at his transfiguration; and were now made witnesses of his agony, the rest of his disciples being left at the entrance of the garden, to watch the approach of *Judas* and his company. See the note on *ch. xvii. 1.*

Ver. 38. My soul is exceeding sorrowful] The words used here, and in the latter part of *ver. 37.* by our translators, are very flat, and fall extremely short of the emphasis of those times; for *λυπῆσθαι*, rendered *to be sorrowful*, signifies, *to be penetrated* with the most lively and piercing sorrow, and *ἀθρομεῖν*, rendered *to be very heavy*, signifies to be quite depressed, and almost overwhelmed with the load. *St. Mark* expresses it, if possible, in a more forcible manner; for *ἐκθαμβῆσθαι*, *ch. xiv. 33.* imports the most shocking mixture of terror and amazement; and *περίλυπος*, *exceeding sorrowful*, in this verse intimates, that he was surrounded with sorrow on every side, so that it broke in upon him with such violence, that, humanly speaking, there was no way to escape. *Dr. Doddridge* translates and paraphrases the passage thus: “*He began to be in a very great and visible dejection, amazement, and anguish of mind, on account of some painful and dreadful sensations, which were then impressed upon his soul by the immediate hand of God.* Then turning to his three disciples,

ples, *he says to them, My soul is surrounded on all sides, with an extremity of anguish and sorrow, which tortures me even almost unto death; and I know that the infirmity of human nature must quickly sink under it, without some extraordinary relief from God.*

Ver. 39. And fell on his face] Our Lord first kneeled and prayed, as St. Luke tells us, ch. xxii. 41. then, in the vehemence of his passion, he fell on his face, and spake the words recorded both by St. Matthew and St. Mark; in the mean time his prayer, though most fervent, was accompanied with expressions of the utmost resignation. See Mac-knight, and Calmet.

Ver. 44. Saying the same words] It is plain, by comparing ver. 39, and 42. that the words were not intirely the same; and it is certain that *λόγος* often signifies *matter*; so that no more appears to be intended than that he prayed to the same purpose as before.

Ver. 50. Friend, wherefore art thou come] The heroic behaviour of the blessed Jesus, in the whole period of his sufferings, will be observed by every attentive eye, and felt by every pious heart; although the sacred historians, according to their usual but wonderful simplicity, make no encomiums upon it. With what composure does he go forth to meet the traitor! with what composure receive that malignant kiss! with what dignity does he deliver himself into the hands of his enemies! yet plainly shewing his superiority over them, and even then *leading* as it were *captivity captive*. See Bp. Hall's Contemplations on the subject.

Ver. 51—53. And behold one of them—drew his sword] None of the Evangelists but John (ch. xviii. 10) mentions the name of Peter on this occasion,

sion, which perhaps the others omitted, lest it should expose him to any prosecution. But John writing long after his death, needed no such precaution. Our Lord told him further, that it implied both a *distrust* of the divine *Providence*, which can always employ a variety of means for the safety of good men, and also a *gross ignorance of the Scriptures*, ver. 53, 54. The *legion* was a Roman military term, and as the band which now surrounded them was a Roman cohort, our Lord might make use of this term by way of contrast, to shew what an inconsiderable thing the cohort was, in comparison of the force he could *summon to his assistance*;—*more than twelve legions*, not of soldiers, but of *angels*,—instead of twelve deserting timorous disciples.

Ver. 57. Led him away to Caiaphas] It appears from John xviii. 13. that Jesus was first led to Annas, because he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas; besides, that, having been himself a high-priest, and very much concerned in the whole matter, it was but natural that he should have this honour done him. St. Matthew makes no mention of Annas, because nothing remarkable happened at his house, Jesus Christ having staid there no longer than what was just necessary to acquaint the council that they were going to lead him to Caiaphas.

Ver. 59, 60. Now—the council sought false witnesses] When the council found that Jesus declined answering the question, whereby they would have drawn from him an acknowledgment of his being the Messiah, (see John xviii. 18, 19, &c.) they examined many witnesses to prove his having assumed that character; for by what afterwards happened, it appears that they considered such a pretension as blasphemy in his mouth, who, being nothing but a man, as they supposed, could not without affront-

ing the majesty of God, take the title of God's Son, which of right belonged to the Messiah.

Ver. 62, 63. The high-priest arose, &c.] The craft of the question put to our Lord, lay in this, that if he answered in the affirmative, they were ready to condemn him as a blasphemer; but if in the negative, they proposed to punish him as an impostor, who by accepting the honours and titles of the Messiah from the people, had deceived them.

Ver. 64. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said] Our Lord would not vouchsafe to give an answer to so frivolous an accusation as was that brought against him, ver. 61. But when he is called upon to acknowledge so important a truth as that contained in this verse, a truth, which he came to reveal to the world, and for the maintainance of which he ventured the loss of his life, then he speaks boldly and openly.

Ver. 65. Then the high-priest rent his clothes] Though the high-priest was forbidden to rend his clothes in some cases; when others were allowed to do it, (Levit. x. 6. xxi. 10.) yet in case of blasphemy or any public calamity, it was thought allowable.

Ver. 71. When he was gone out into the porch] St. Matthew and St. Mark say it was a *woman* that attacked Peter in the porch; St. Luke says it was a man; and Grotius, to reconcile the evangelists, hath shewn that the Greek word *Ανθρωπος*, signifies both *man* and *woman*, as *homo* does in the Latin. But without having recourse to this criticism, which appears rather too nice, it is natural and easy to suppose, that the apostle was accosted in the porch both by a woman and a man; the former mentioned by St. Matthew and St. Mark, the latter by St. Luke. The Jews gave our Lord the appellation of

Jesus

Jesus of Nazareth, to shew that they looked upon him as an impostor, who was neither a prophet nor the Messiah, and that they held him in the greatest contempt; and in that view the modern Jews gave him the same appellation.

Ver. 72. And again he denied with an oath] How must these people, before whom Peter denied his Lord, be surprized, when they saw, as no doubt some of them did, this timorous disciple, within the compass of a few weeks, when he was brought with John before the council, not only maintaining the cause and honour of Jesus, but boldly charging the murder of this prince of life upon the chief men of the nation, and solemnly warning them of their guilt and danger in consequence of it! See Acts iv. 5, 12.

Ver. 75. And Peter remembered the words of Jesus, which said, &c.] He was permitted to fall in this manner, to teach mankind two lessons: *first*, that whatever a person's attainments may have been formerly, if once he passes the bounds of innocence, he commonly proceeds from bad to worse, one sin naturally drawing on another; for which reason, the very least appearances of evil are to be dreaded, and the greatest humility and self-diffidence maintained. In the *second* place, the goodness wherewith Jesus treated his fallen apostle, teaches us, that no sinner whatever needs despair of mercy, who truly repents.

CHAP. XXVII.

Ver. 1, 2. When the morning was come] The preceding transactions of this malignant night being over, as soon as the day dawned, the priests and
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elders

elders having condemned Jesus, resolved to carry him, loaded with chains, before the governor, that he likewise might give sentence against him: They could not otherwise accomplish their purpose, the power of life and death being now taken out of their hands. From the history of the *Acts* it appears, that the Roman governors of Judea resided commonly at Cæsarea, and that there was only an inferior officer in Jerusalem, with a single legion to keep the peace of the city. At the great festivals, however, they came up to suppress or prevent tumults, and to administer justice; for the governors of provinces frequently visited the principal towns under their jurisdiction on this latter account. See John xviii. 39. and Lardner's *Credibility*, part i. b. 1. ch. Pilate was, properly speaking, no more than procurator of Judea; but he was called governor, because this name was better known, and because Pilate discharged all the offices of a governor, namely, in taking cognizance of criminal causes, as his predecessors had done, and as was usual with the procurators in the smaller provinces of the empire, where there were no proconsuls. See Joseph. War, b. 2. and Tacitus, lib. xv. c. 44. Our Saviour eat the paschal supper in the evening; then he went into the garden, where he was apprehended, and was in the high-priest's palace the rest of the night. In the morning they hurry him away, bound with fetters, to the common magistrate.

Ver. 9, 10. (Then was fulfilled, &c.] I. Concerning this prophecy we must FIRST remark, that there is, by some means or other, a mistake in the name of the prophet, not Jeremy, but Zachary, being the prophet in whose writings this passage is found. But though the present reading is certainly very ancient, it appears to me very doubtful, whether

ther any prophet's name was mentioned in the first copies, as the Syriac version, which is allowed to have been made in the most early times, reads only, *which was spoken by the prophet*; and St. Austin tells us, that in his time there were many Greek copies, in which no particular name of any prophet was inserted.

Ver. 18. (For he knew that for envy they had delivered him)] Pilate had probably heard of the stir made by the rulers on this occasion, and as a prudent magistrate, could not but have inquired into the reason of it. The modesty with which Jesus appeared before him; must have given credit to the report he had received; and the confidence which Jesus placed in his innocence, by not replying to any charge that was brought against him, might have been sufficient to convince Pilate, that there was no fault in him. Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea might have been consulted by Pilate, at the first appearance of the tumult; for Joseph of Arimathea most probably was personally acquainted with Pilate, as may be inferred from his going to him to beg the body of Jesus.

Ver. 19. When he was set down &c.] While he was sitting on, &c. Wat. and MS. While Rome was governed by a commonwealth, it was unusual for the governors of provinces to take their wives with them; but afterwards it grew customary, and the motion made against it in the fourth year of Tiberius was rejected with some indignation.

Ver. 24. Pilate—took water, &c.] It is well known that the Jews in some cases were appointed to wash their hands; as a solemn token that they were not themselves concerned in a murder committed by some unknown person. See Deut. xxi. 6—9. In allusion to which law the Psalmist says,

G g 3

I will

I will wash mine hands in innocency, i. e. in testimony of mine innocence.

Ver. 25. His blood be on us, &c.] As this terrible imprecation was dreadfully answered in the ruin so quickly brought on the Jewish nation, and the calamities which have since pursued that wretched people, in almost all ages and countries, so it was peculiarly illustrated in the severity with which Titus, merciful as he naturally was, treated the Jews whom he took during the siege of Jerusalem; of whom Josephus himself writes, that *ματυρῆμινον ανισαυρεστο*, *having been scourged, and tortured in a very terrible manner, they were crucified*, in view and near the walls of this city, perhaps, among other places, on *mount Calvary*; and it is very probable this might be the fate of some of those very persons who now joined in this cry, as it undoubtedly was of many of their *children*. For Josephus, who was an eye-witness, expressly declares, “that the number of those thus *crucified* was so great, that there was not room for the *crosses* to stand by each other, and that at last they had not *wood enough* to make crosses of:” a passage which, especially when compared with the verse before us, must impress and astonish the attentive reader beyond any other in the whole story.

Ver. 26. And when he had scourged Jesus] The Romans usually scourged the criminals whom they condemned to be crucified: this was the reason why Pilate ordered our Lord to be scourged before he delivered him to the soldiers to be crucified.

Ver. 29. And when they had platted a crown of thorns] Though it is unquestionable that they intended hereby to expose our Lord's pretended royalty to ridicule and contempt, as well as by the purple robe and mock sceptre; yet had that been all,
a crown

a crown of thorns might have served as well. They meant, without all question, to add cruelty to their scorn, which especially appeared in their striking him on the head, to drive the horrid thorns into the tender parts of his temples when this crown was put on. If the best descriptions of the eastern *thorns* are to be credited, they are much larger than any commonly known in these parts.

Ver. 32. And as they came out, &c.] We learn from the other Evangelists, that our blessed Lord had borne his cross agreeable to the custom in executions, at his first setting out. It was not indeed the whole cross which criminals carried, but only that transverse piece of wood to which the arms were fastened, and which was called *antennæ*, or *furca*, going across the *stipes* or upright beam, which was fixed on the earth; the criminal, from carrying this, was called *furcifer*. Our blessed Lord, through the fatigue of the preceding night, spent wholly without sleep, the agony he had undergone in the garden, his having been hurried from place to place, and obliged to stand the whole time of his trial, the want of food, and the loss of blood which he had sustained, was become so faint, that he sunk beneath the burden, and was not able to bear the weight of the cross. The soldiers however did not remove the cross out of compassion to Christ, but from an apprehension of his dying by the excessive fatigue, and thereby eluding the public punishment to which they were escorting him. See L'Enfant, Lipsius *de Cruce*, and Bp. Pearson on the Creed, p. 203.

Ver. 34. They gave him vinegar to drink, mingled with gall] It was usual to give criminals before they suffered, a stupefying potion to render them insensible of the ignominy and pain of their punishment:

ment : But our blessed Lord, because he would bear his sufferings, however sharp, not by intoxicating and stupifying himself, but through the strength of patience, fortitude, and faith, therefore refused to drink of it.

Ver. 38. Then were two thieves crucified with him] By *thieves* may be meant here persons concerned in an insurrection, perhaps confederates with Barabbas.

Ver. 41—43. Likewise also the chief priests, mocking, &c.] It is plain, therefore, that the priests said they would believe if Jesus came down, not because their incorrigible stubbornness would have yielded to any proof, however convincing, but to insult Christ ; fancying it impossible for him now to escape out of their hands.

Ver. 44. The thieves also—cast the same in his teeth] Reproached him in like manner. St. Luke says, that *one* only of the thieves reproached our Lord ; the other exercised a most extraordinary faith in him. See Luke xxiii. 40. Some commentators endeavour to remove this difficulty, by supposing that both the thieves might revile Jesus at first ; but this solution is not very probable : The phrase is an Hebraism, it being very common in that language to express a single thing in the plural number, especially when it is not the speaker's or writer's intention to be more particular. Thus, Judg. xii. 7. *then died Jephtha the Gileadite, and was buried in the cities of Gilead ; i. e. in one of the cities of Gilead*, as it is well supplied by our translators : So likewise the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, speaking of the worthies of the Old Testament, says, *they stopped the mouths of lions, they were sawn asunder* ; whereas the former sentence is applicable only to Daniel, and the latter to Isaiah. So that by the word *thieves*,
both

both here and in St. Mark, we are to understand only one of the thieves; but see more on this subject on ch. xxvi. 6.

Ver. 45. Now from the sixth hour, &c.] During the last three hours that our Lord hung on the cross, a darkness covered the face of the earth, to the great terror and amazement of the people present at his execution. This extraordinary alteration in the face of nature was peculiarly proper, whilst the Sun of Righteousness was withdrawing his beams from the land of Israel, and from the world, not only because it was a miraculous testimony borne by God himself to his innocence, but also because it was a fit emblem of his departure and its effects, at least till his light shone out anew with additional splendor, in the ministry of his Apostles. The Jews had been accustomed to the figurative language of the *eclipse of the luminaries*, as significative of some extraordinary revolution or calamity, and could not but recollect the words of Amos viii. 9, 10. on this occasion. The heathens likewise had been taught to look on these circumstances as indications of the perpetration of some heinous and enormous crime; and how enormous was that now committed by the Jews. The darkness which now covered Judea, together with the neighbouring countries, beginning about noon, and continuing till Jesus expired, was not the effect of an ordinary eclipse of the sun, for that can never happen, except when the moon is about the change; whereas now it was full moon; not to mention that total darkneses occasioned by eclipses of the sun, never continue above twelve or fifteen minutes. Wherefore it must have been produced by the divine power, in a manner we are not able to explain.

Ver.

Ver. 46. Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, &c.] The sufferings which made our Lord cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* were not merely those which appeared to the spectators, viz. the pains of death which he underwent. Many of his followers have suffered sharper and more lingering bodily torture, ending in death, without thinking themselves on that account forsaken of God; on the contrary, they both felt and expressed raptures of joy under the bitterest torments. Why then should Jesus have complained, and been so dejected under inferior sufferings, as we must acknowledge them to be, if there was nothing here but the pains of crucifixion? Is there any other circumstance in this history which leads us to think him defective in courage or patience? In piety and resignation came he behind his own Apostles? Were his views of God and religion more confined than theirs? Had he greater insensibility of pain than they, without a proper balance arising from the superiority of his understanding? In short, was he worse qualified for martyrdom than they? The truth is, his words on the cross cannot be accounted for, but on the supposition that he suffered in his mind pains inexpressible, inflicted on him by an immediate interposition of the power of God, the nature and intenseness of which cannot in the language of men be more justly, or more emphatically expressed, than by the metaphor of *God's forsaking him*. Some think Jesus on this occasion repeated the whole 22d psalm. And as it contains the most remarkable particulars of our Lord's passion, being a sort of summary of all the prophecies relative to that subject, by citing it on the cross, and applying it to himself, Jesus signified, that he was now accomplishing the things therein

therein predicted concerning the Messiah. Farther, as the psalm is composed in the form of a prayer, by citing it at this time, Jesus also claimed of his Father the performance of all the promises he had made, whether to him, or to his people, the chief of which are recorded in the latter part of the psalm.

Ver. 50. Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost] The Evangelists use different words in expressing our Lord's death, which our translators, notwithstanding, render in the same manner,—He *yielded*, or *gave up the ghost*; St. Mark and St. Luke say, *ἐξέπνευσε*, *He expired*; St. John *παρέδωκε τὸ πνεῦμα*, *He dismissed his spirit*; as the same word *ἀφίημι* is used ch. xiii. 36. Mark iv. 36. xi. 6. and elsewhere. Now this expression seems admirably to suit our Lord's words, John x. 18. *No man taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself*, &c. shewing, (as did also the *strong cry*, which so much impressed the centurion) that he died by the voluntary act of his own mind, according to the power received from the Father; and in a way peculiar to himself, by which he alone of all men that ever existed could have continued alive, even in the greatest tortures as long as he pleased, or have retired from the body whenever he thought fit.

Ver. 51. The veil of the temple was rent, &c.] While Jesus breathed his last, the veil of the temple was miraculously rent from top to bottom; most probably in presence of the priests who burned the incense in the holy place at the evening sacrifice; for the *ninth hour*, at which Jesus expired, was the hour of offering that sacrifice. The sudden rending of that veil was a supernatural sign of the destruction of the temple being at hand, and of the dissolution

dissolution of the Jewish œconomy. The earth also trembled, and the rocks rent, in token of the Almighty's displeasure against the Jewish nation, on account of the horrid impiety whereof they were now guilty. Mr. Fleming tells us, that a deist lately travelling through Palestine, was converted by viewing one of these rocks, which still remains torn asunder, not in the weakest place, but across the veins; a plain proof that it was done in a supernatural manner. Sandys, in his travels, p. 264. has given a natural description and delineation of this figure; and Mr. Maundrel tells us, that it is about a span wide at the upper part, and two spans deep, after which it closes, but opens again below, and runs down to an unknown depth in the earth. He adds, that every man's sense and reason must convince him, that this is a natural and genuine breach. See Fleming's Christology, vol. ii. p. 97. and Maundrel's journey from Aleppo, p. 73.

Ver. 52, 53. And the graves were opened, &c.] The ancient sepulchres were hewn out of rocks, which being rent by the earthquake, discovered the cells wherein the bodies of the dead were deposited; but though these sepulchres were opened by the earthquake at our Lord's death, yet the dead in them did not come to life till his resurrection: for *Jesus himself was the first-born from the dead*, Col. i. 18. and *the first-fruits of them that slept*, 1 Cor. xv. 20. It seems probable, that those *saints* were not some of the most eminent ones mentioned in the Old Testament, but disciples, who had died lately; for when they went into the city, they were known by the persons who saw them, which could not well have happened, had they not been their contemporaries; and as the rending of the veil of the temple intimated that the entrance into the holy place,

place, the type of heaven, was now laid open to all nations, so the resurrection of a number of saints from the dead, demonstrated that the power of death and the grave was broken, the sting was taken from death, and the victory wrested from the grave.

Ver. 54. Truly this was the Son of God] Bp. Sherlock, (disc. ix. vol. i. 270.) has made a fine use of the passage before us in the following words: "Go to your natural religion, says he, lay before her Mahomet and his disciples arrayed in armour and in blood, riding in triumph over the spoils of thousands and tens of thousands, who fell by his victorious sword. Shew her the cities which he set in flames, the countries which he ravaged, and destroyed, and the miserable distress of all the inhabitants of the earth. When she has viewed him in this scene, carry her to his retirements; shew her the prophet's chamber, his concubines, and wives: let her see his adultery, and hear him alledge revelation and a divine commission to justify his lust and his oppression. When she is tired with this prospect, then shew her the blessed Jesus, humble and meek, doing good to all the sons of men, patiently instructing both the ignorant and the perverse: let her see him in his most retired privacies; let her follow him to the mount, and hear his devotions and supplications to God: Carry her to his table, to view his poor fare, and hear his heavenly discourse; let her see him injured, but not provoked; let her attend him to the tribunal, and consider the patience with which he endured the scoffs and reproaches of his enemies; lead her to his cross, and let her view him in the agony of death, and hear his last prayer for his persecutors, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!*——

H h

"When

“When *natural religion* has viewed both, ask which is the prophet of God?—But we have already had her answer; when she saw part of this scene through the eyes of the centurion who attended at the cross, by him, she spoke and said, *Truly this was the Son of God.*”

Ver. 57. A rich man of Arimathea] A city of the Jews, anciently called *Romath*, which lay in the tribe of Ephraim, and was the city of the prophet Samuel. St. Mark xv. 42. describes Joseph under these two characters; *first*, that he *was an honourable counsellor*; *secondly*, that *he waited for the kingdom of God*. And St. Luke xxiii. 51. adds, that *he had not consented to the condemnation of Jesus with the rest of the Sanhedrim*. See on John xix. 38. and the note on ver. 1. of this chapter.

Ver. 58. He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus] St. Mark says, ch. xv. 43. that *he went in boldly, and craved the body*. And it was certainly a courageous act for that rich and noble senator thus publicly to own his friendship to Jesus in the midst of his greatest infamy; and a person of such sagacity could not but know, that if a resurrection should happen, nothing would have been more natural than that he should be brought into question as a confederate in the pretended fraud of conveying him away. But the regard he had for his Master overcame all other considerations: He therefore requested leave to take down his body, because, if no friend had obtained it, it would have been ignominiously cast out with those of the common malefactors. See a more distant account of this event in John xix. 38, &c.

Ver. 60. In his own new tomb] See on John xix. 41. The sepulchre in which they laid our Lord being but lately made, was unfinished, and had

had not yet a lock on its door; therefore they fastened the door by *rolling a great stone* to it. The word *roll* implies, that the stone was both ponderous and large, too large to be carried, and therefore it was rolled upon the ground; according to Beza's copy, it was so weighty, that twenty men could not roll it; which was the reason why the woman asked that question recorded by another Evangelist,—*Who shall roll away the stone for us?* Which implied, that they were both too few and too weak to do it for themselves. This sepulchre, it seems, differed from that of Lazarus, in being partly above ground; whereas the other, being wholly under ground, had a stone laid on the mouth of it, covering the entry of the stair by which they went down to it. See Beza and Macknight.

Ver. 62, 64. Now the next day that followed the day of the preparation] The next day then was the sabbath, according to the Jewish stile; but the Evangelist here expresses it by this circumlocution, *the day which followed the day*, because the Jewish sabbath was then abolished, and a new order succeeded. The Christian Sunday is the octave of that week. See Heylin.

C H A P XXVIII.

Ver. 1. In the end of the sabbath, &c.] Dr. Waterland closes the last chapter thus, *Sealing a stone, and setting a watch late on the sabbath*; and begins the present,—*and when it began to dawn, &c.* As the Jewish day began at sun-setting, the Jews distinguished the evening into two parts, which they called the first and second evening; the first being the evening with which the preceding day

ended, and the second the evening with which the new day began. The first evening was the space from three in the afternoon to sun-setting; the second began at sun-setting, and lasted till nine, comprehending the whole first watch of the night.

Ver. 11—15. Now when they were going, &c.] The chief priests, having received the report of the guard, called the whole senate together, and consulted among themselves what they were to do. The deliberations, however, of the meeting were not kept secret. They were reported to the disciples, perhaps by Joseph and Nicodemus, two members of the council, who were our Lord's friends. The priests were reduced to a most absurd story, though certainly the best colour which they could put on the affair; a story, which they endeavoured by bribery and every other mean method to propagate as much as they could; and accordingly St. Matthew tells us, ver. 15. that this idle tale was commonly reported among the Jews, even so long after the ascension of our Lord, as when he wrote his Gospel. Justin Martyr informs us, that the Jews sent a rescript or embassy to their brethren of the dispersion, and their converts, all over the Globe, affirming this very thing; and Tertullian likewise says as much. To furnish the Jewish converts with an answer to this absurd story, so industriously propagated among their unbelieving brethren, and supported by the authority of the chief priests and elders, this evangelist relates at large the history of the guarding the sepulchre, the earthquake, the descent of the angel, his rolling away the stone, and the fright of the soldiers at his appearance: And indeed by comparing this relation with the report given out by the soldiers, it will easily appear on which side the truth lay. For as there

there is nothing in the miraculous resurrection of our Lord, so repugnant to reason and probability, as that the disciples should be able to roll away the stone which closed up the mouth of the sepulchre, and carry off the body of Jesus unperceived by the soldiers, who were set there on purpose to guard against such an attempt. The guards say that they were asleep, and that the disciples in the mean time stole away the body: But how came they to be so punctual in relating what happened when they were asleep? What induced them to believe that the body was stolen at all? What, that it was stolen by *the disciples*, since by their own confession, they were asleep, and saw nothing,—saw nobody? As this story has no evidence to support it, so neither has it any probability. The disciples were weak ignorant men, full of the popular prejudices and superstitions of their country; and is it likely that such men should engage in so desperate a design as to steal away the body in opposition to the combined power of the Jews and Romans?

Ver. 16, 17. Then the eleven disciples went away, &c.] The time now approached when Jesus was to shew himself publicly in Galilee, after having frequently shewn himself in a more private manner to his disciples and the women. This was the most remarkable of all his appearances, he promised it to his Apostles before his death, ch. xxvi. 32. The angels who attended at his resurrection spoke of it to the women who came to the sepulchre, and represented it as promised to them also, Mark xvi. 7. Nay, Jesus himself, after his resurrection, desired the company of women to tell his brethren to go into Galilee, where they should see him, as if the appearance he was to make that day and on the eighth day thereafter, were of small im-

portance in comparison. Moreover, the place where he was to appear in Galilee, was mentioned by him as St. Matthew here informs us. Whether there were more present at this appearance than the eleven, the evangelist does not say: nevertheless the circumstances of the case direct us to believe that it had many witnesses. This appearance was known before-hand. The place where it was to happen was pointed out by Jesus himself. The report, therefore, of his being to appear, must have spread abroad, and brought many to the place at the appointed time. In short, it is reasonable to think that most of the disciples now enjoyed the happiness of beholding personally their master raised from the dead. What confirms this supposition is, that St. Paul says expressly, that Jesus after his resurrection, *was seen of above five hundred at once*, 1 Cor. xv. 6. For the number of witnesses mentioned by St. Paul, agrees better with the appearance on the mount in Galilee, described by St. Matthew, than with any other. Galilee having been the principle scene of Christ's ministry, the greatest part of his followers lived there; for which reason he chose to make, what may be called his most solemn and public appearance after his resurrection on a mountain in that country; the appearance to which a general meeting of all his disciples was summoned, not only by the angels who attended his resurrection, but by our Lord himself, the very day on which he rose. The greatest part of those present were so fully convinced the person they saw was their master, that they worshipped him:—*and when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted*: with respect to a few, their joy on seeing their Lord, put them into a kind of perturbation, and their desire that it might be him, made them doubtful,

doubtful, and afraid that it was not. This reason is assigned by St. Luke for the unbelief of some on an occasion previous to this. (See ch. xxvi. 41) They believed not for joy and wonder, and therefore it may be fitly offered to account for the unbelief of others on this.

Ver. 18. All power is given unto me, &c.] Our Saviour here declares all power and authority to be given to him at his resurrection; in consequence of which power he commissions his disciples to convert, baptize, and instruct the world. There is no doubt but this *power* is part of the exaltation spoken of by St. Paul, to which God raised Christ for his sufferings. See Philip. ii. 6. The powers delegated to the ministers of the church, plainly derive themselves from this power so received; and consequently all acts done by them in the name of Christ, are founded in the power which he received at his resurrection. See Rom. i. 4. Col. i. 15. Ephes. i. Our Saviour has told us, that *all power is given unto him*, in which he asserts both his own and the Father's authority; his own, as being invested with all power: his Father's, as being the author and fountain of all the power claimed and exercised by the Son. He has told us by his apostle, that at the consummation of all things, the Son shall resign his power, *that God may be all in all*; a sufficient declaration, that the power now exercised by him is the Father's power, which, as it is at last to be given up to him, so was it at first received from him. From hence it is manifest, that the honour paid to Christ is ultimately referred to God the Father; for the honour paid to Christ being founded in the power and glory to which he is exalted; the honours paid must naturally follow the power and glory to which it relates, and at the last, terminate in the fountain
and

and origin of that power and glory, even God the Father. By this means the peculiar honour of God the Father is secured, whilst we worship and adore the Son. If we adore the Son, it is because of the relation to the Father: If we honour our Redeemer, that honour must redound to his glory, who was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. If we apply it to Christ as our High-priest, at the same time we acknowledge His glory, who anointed him to this office. If we worship him who is head of the church, we cannot but adore him who gave Christ to be the head of the church: If we fall down before him who has all power and might, at the same time do we confess the excellency of the Father, who hath given him all power, and put all things in subjection under him. So that we cannot honour the Son as we ought to do, but we must at the same time honour the Father with the honour due to him. And this sufficiently shews, that the Gospel has not strained the precepts of natural religion, in teaching us to honour the Son whom the Father hath exalted to the right-hand of Majesty on high, and given to be head over all principalities and powers, even to the consummation of all things. See Sherlock's Discourses, vol 4. disc. 1. part 4.

Ver. 19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, &c.] The word μαθητεύσατε, is very properly rendered *Profelyte*, or *Make disciples of*, to distinguish it duly from διδάσκοντες, *teaching*, in the next verse. Though perhaps we should not positively assert, that the use of *these very words* is essential to *Christian baptism*, yet surely the expression must intimate the necessity of some *distinct regard*, to each of the *sacred three*, which is always to be maintained in the administration of this ordinance; and consequently

quently it must imply that more was said to those of whose baptism we read in the *Acts*, than is there recorded, before they were admitted to it. The Christian church in succeeding ages has acted a safe and wise part in retaining these words; and they contain so strong an intimation, that *each* of these *persons* is properly God, and that worship is to be paid, and glory ascribed to *each*, that we cannot but hope they will be a means of maintaining the belief of the one, and the practice of the other, among the generality of Christians to the end of the world. See Doddridge, Grotius, and Waterland's Sermons on the Trinity, p. 286.

Ver. 20. Teaching them, &c.] The ascension of our blessed Lord seems to have been a fact so well known to all the Christians in Palestine, that there was no necessity for St. Matthew to mention it. It seems to be implied, and to have been declared to his disciples, from this passage, which is intended to obviate the objection which would arise from considering that circumstance; and our Lord may be represented as saying, "I am indeed going to heaven and shall not appear visibly among you; but I shall always be spiritually present with you." St. Mark and St. Luke, writing to those who lived out of Judea, very properly mention the ascension, and were under a necessity to do so. Our Saviour adds, *I am with you always even to the end of the world*; that is, to the final dissolution of this temporary system. The word *Amen*, with which each of the Gospels ends, seems chiefly to have been intended as an intimation of the conclusion of the book, and as an asseveration of the certain truth of the things contained in it.

REFLECTIONS ON CHAP. XXVIII.

The world had now lasted four thousand years, at the time of Christ's death, and all generations hitherto had sunk into the grave, unknowing what would become of them. We must except here the patriarchs and saints of the Jewish church, who, by an anticipated revelation of a Redeemer, had their hopes full of immortality. But the bulk of mankind were in the dark, concerning a future state. Good men might wish, and wise men expect a life to come; but these wishes, and these expectations, were perplexed with much doubt and misgiving. Death was as a gulf, whereof they saw only the entrance, and could discern nothing beyond. But the glories of our Lord's resurrection, have enlightened the grave, and so dissipated the shades of death, as to shew that to be only a passage or thoroughfare, which before seemed a gulf and an abyss. For life and immortality were brought to light by the Gospel of Christ, who declared not only that there was a resurrection, but that He himself was *the resurrection*,—or that power whereby men shall be raised from the dead, —*and the life*, John xi. 25. As the sun is light in himself, and the great source of day to all the worlds around him, so Christ is resurrection to himself, and the great cause and author of resurrection to all mankind; who, after they have undergone the common sentence of death passed upon them in Adam, the first head of our race, are by this second representative of the human species restored to immortality; for *since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead; for as by Adam all died, even so by Christ shall all be made alive.*

alive. And indeed it is a very natural prerogative of Christ, as Judge of the world, that he should by his own power summon all men to his tribunal: of which he himself gives a most particular account. John v. 21—26, &c.

Resurrection and a future judgement are the fundamental principles of morality, and they are in the Gospel not only taught, but demonstrated. The Divinity raised Christ's human body out of the grave, to convince us that he will also raise us at the last day. This is a miracle in kind, involving the thing in question, most pertinent, cogent, and irrefragable; so that we cannot but conclude with St. Paul, *That God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man, whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead,* Acts xvii. 31.

Seeing then that we have this assurance, do we *hope*, or do we *fear* a resurrection?—for we must expect it. If upon just grounds we hope for it, happy are we; but if we fear it, may we be warned in time to remove those fears, by such an amendment of life, as may give comfort and joy to the soul in the prospect of futurity. It is my duty here to persuade every reader to this, and to advise and direct him in the performance of it: But I can only persuade and advise; he himself must *work out his own salvation.*